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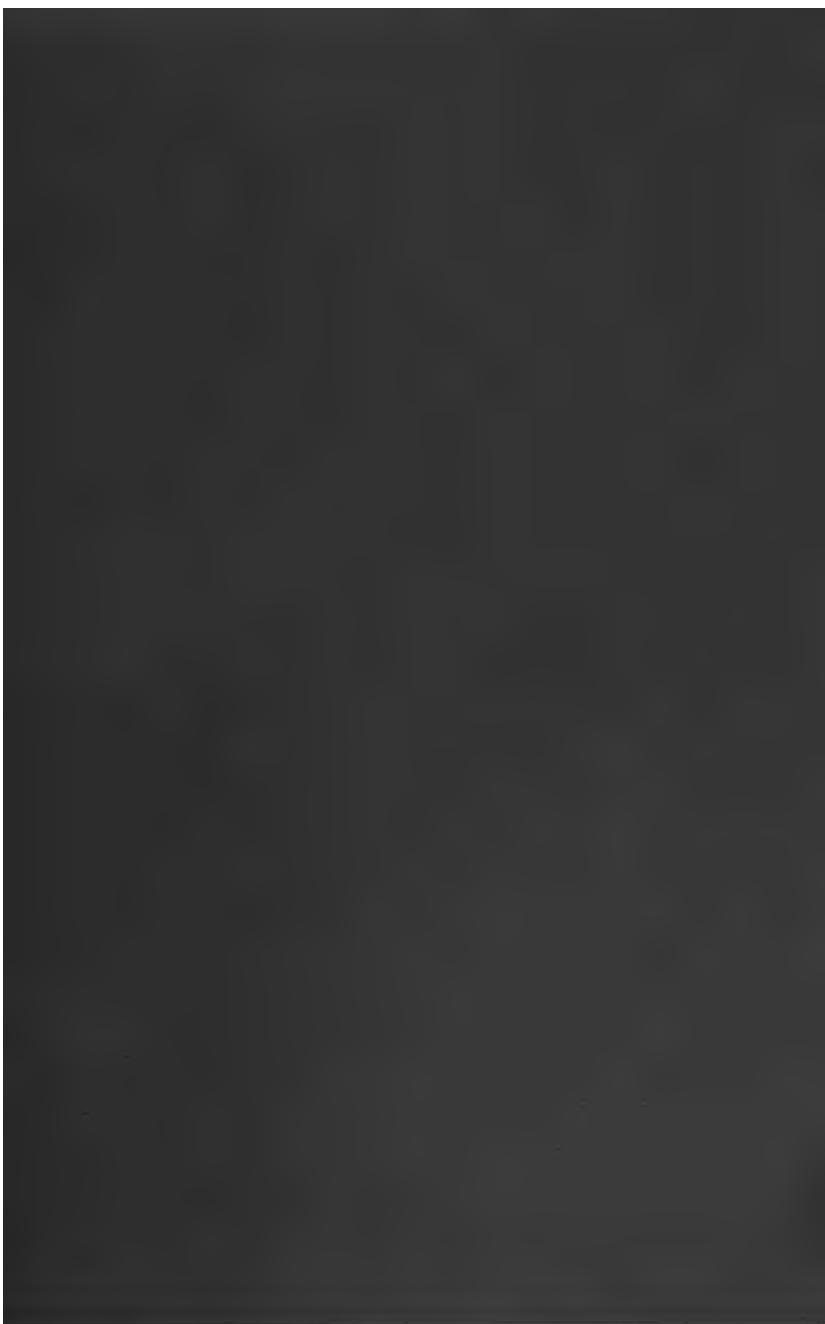


BY THE AUTHOR OF

WON BY WAITING



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**D O N O V A N .**

**VOL. III.**



# DONOVAN

A Novel

BY

EDNA LYALL

AUTHOR OF

“WON BY WAITING.”

“And I smiled to think God's greatness flowed around  
Our incompleteness,—  
Round our restlessness, His rest.”  
E. B. BROWNING.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.



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# DONOVAN.

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## CHAPTER I.

### COBWEBS AND QUESTIONS.

Then fiercely we dig the fountain,  
Oh ! whence do the waters rise ?  
Then panting we climb the mountain,  
Oh ! are there indeed blue skies ?  
And we dig till the soul is weary,  
Nor find the waters out !  
And we climb till all is dreary,  
And still the sky is a doubt.

Search not the roots of the fountain,  
But drink the water bright ;  
Gaze far above the mountain,  
The sky may speak in light.  
But if yet thou see no beauty—  
If widowed thy heart yet cries—  
With thy hands go and do thy duty,  
And thy work will clear thine eyes.

*Violin Songs.* GEORGE MACDONALD.

THE church at Porthkerran stood at some little distance from the village. It was one of those old square-towered granite churches

which abound in the West, and the picturesque grave-yard, with its rather sombre-looking slate tomb-stones, commanded a wide view over the bay of Porthkerran and the great blue expanse beyond. The south wall of the church-yard was on the very verge of the cliff, and here, one evening in the end of September, Donovan and Waif established themselves; service was going on, but both dog and master felt that they had no part or lot in such things; and though not much given to "meditations among the tombs," they had for some reason found their way up to the church-yard. It was the evening of the Harvest Festival, Donovan had been too busy to feel bored by the details of the decorations with which in old times Adela used to rouse his ire, but he could not help regretting that his last evening at Porthkerran should be spent in enforced solitude.

The sense of isolation came to him for the first time since he had been among the Tremains; Sunday after Sunday he had stayed contentedly behind when they went to church, but this evening a regret that he could not be with them was stirring in his heart. A chance word of Nesta's had awakened it.

"Dono will stay with us till we do to bed," she had announced triumphantly to Dick as he was leaving the house. "Dono is much

betterer than you, he doesn't do away and leave us."

It was impossible to escape from the small elf, she was on his shoulder and her arms were clinging fast round his neck, but Donovan's face glowed at her next remark.

"Don't you want to see the flowers and the corn they've putted in the church, Dono? Won't you do when we're in bed?"

Dick came to the rescue.

"Mr. Dono will be much too busy with his skeleton, Nesta; don't you know that he loves the skeleton better than he loves you?"

"The steleton's a very ugly thing," said Nesta, pouting, "and he oughtn't to like it so much."

Then ensued a noisy romp; the rest of the party started for church. Presently Jackie and Nesta were fetched by the nurse, and Donovan shut himself into the study alone. But somehow Nesta's rival the "steleton" engrossed him less than usual; the fascinating study of bones did not still the feeling of unrest which the child's unconscious words had stirred.

Did he not really want to join with the others? Was it any pleasure to him to keep aloof? Had he not felt a pang of envy when he saw the real delight which the prospect of this thanksgiving service gave to the Tremains?

Would it not be an infinite rest to be able to believe in anything so ennobling, so comforting as Christianity? For nearly three months he had been watching the life at Trenant. The Tremains were by no means a faultless family, but their lives were very different from any he had hitherto seen, and it had dawned on him as a possibility that their belief might have something to do with this difference. Christianity had hitherto shown itself to him as a thing of creeds, not as a living of the Christ life, and how to explain this new phenomenon he did not know. Were these people loveable in spite of their creed, or because of it? One thing was plain, however inexplicable it might be: they possessed something which he did not possess, something which—it had come to that now—he *longed* to possess. While he was restless and unsatisfied, they were at peace; while he was daily becoming more doubtful as to the truth of the views he held, they were absolutely convinced that their Master was not only true, but the Way to knowledge of all Truth. The more enviable this certainty, however, the more impossible it seemed to him to make the faith his own. Study and thought had indeed brought him from his more positive atheism to a sort of agnosticism, but, although this had at first seemed hopeful and restful in contrast with his

former creed, it now forced upon him an even worse agony. He had accepted his dreamy certainty with stoicism, but to waver in doubt, to know nothing, to feel that in knowledge only could there be rest, and yet to despair of ever gaining that knowledge, this was indeed a misery which he had never contemplated. He saw no way out of his difficulty. To believe because belief would be pleasant was (happily) quite as impossible to him now as it had been at Codrington, when the chorus of "*I will believe*" had dinned him into a bitter denunciation of "cupboard" faith. The only prospect then which seemed before him was a constant craving after the unknown.

To be conscious of hunger does not always bring us bread at once, but it does prove our need of bread, and it does make us ready to receive it when given.

The half-stifled thoughts which had lurked in his mind during his stay at Trenant now forced themselves upon him. He grew too restless and unhappy to work, and at last, whistling to Waif to follow him, he left the house, and sauntered out in the cool evening. Instinctively he mounted the hill to the church, stretched himself on the wall already described, at no great distance from the cross which marked his father's grave, and listened to the

singing which, through open door and window, was borne to him clearly. There were special psalms that night. He found himself listening intently for Gladys's voice, and in so doing he caught the words of the grand old descriptive poem.

“They went astray in the wilderness out of the way :  
And found no city to dwell in.  
Hungry and thirsty,  
Their soul fainted in them.  
So they cried unto the Lord in their trouble ;  
And He delivered them from their distress.  
He led them forth by the right way  
That they might go to the city where they dwelt.  
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For he satisfieth the empty soul ;  
And filleth the hungry soul with goodness.”

He heard no more. The recollection of the time when he *had* “cried” unto the Great Unknown in his trouble, the time when his atheism had brought him to the verge of madness, when his philosophy had failed, and helplessly and illogically he had prayed that Dot's agony might end, returned to him now. But that appeal had been an involuntary one. He could not calmly and deliberately address a Being in whom he did not believe ; though he was hungering to find the Truth, he could not try to find it by any unreal means.

Thus much he had arrived at when his attention was drawn away to a tragedy in insect

life which was going on close beside him. In an angle of the wall was a large spider's web; caught in its meshes hung an unusual victim—a wasp, who, in spite of his size and strength, found the clinging gossamer threads too much for him. The spider drew nearer and nearer. Donovan speculated which would get the best of it, the spider with his cunning, or the wasp with his sting. Buzz! whirr! buzz! the web would not yield, the prisoner struggled in vain, on came the stealthy spider, evidently the victory would be his. But a sudden fellow-feeling for the imprisoned insect rose in Donovan's heart, he sprang up, demolished the cobweb, and had the satisfaction of seeing the spider scuttle away as fast as his long legs could carry him, while the wasp flew off in the still evening air.

“Free! you lucky beast!” he exclaimed.

“Who is the lucky beast?” said a voice behind him.

He looked round and saw Dr. Tremain.

“I've just been fetched out of church to see a patient. I hope that wasn't intended for a congratulation!”

Donovan laughed.

“No; I was apostrophizing a wasp I've just rescued from a cobweb. Are you going far? May I come with you?”



"By all means; it's a message from St. Kerran's. Come and drive me, will you?"

They left the churchyard arm-in-arm, and before long Star and Ajax were bearing them rapidly away in the pony-chaise.

"It's a glorious night for a drive," said the doctor. "And I am glad not to have missed you on your last evening. We shall be very dull when you are gone, Donovan; as to Nesta, I think she will break her heart. You have become a necessity to her."

"Or she to me?" said Donovan, smiling. "It's extraordinary what a difference it makes to have children in a house."

"Is it not Huxley who speaks of 'the eminently sympathetic mind of childhood'?" said Dr. Tremain. "That has always struck me very much—the readiness with which a child makes itself one with all around it, the freedom with which it gives its confidence, and the delight with which it helps others; that readiness to serve and love always seems to me stronger proof than anything that as

‘Trailing clouds of glory do we come  
From God, who is our home.’ ”

"Your Wordsworth is too spiritual and mystical for me," said Donovan, with some bitterness.

"Or too simple?" questioned the doctor.

"No, no; or simple only to the favoured few who had these intimations of immortality. For my part I am not aware that heaven ever 'lay about me in my infancy.' I know that injustice and tyranny in very visible forms were there, and only now do I know what a grudge I owe them. If from your very babyhood you have had to fight your own battles, and rely on yourself, it isn't very possible at two and twenty to—to——" he hesitated.

"To become a child again," said Dr. Tremain, quietly, "and to recognize that above the petty tyrannies and injustices of the world is the Eternal Truth."

"You have never spoken to me of these things before," said Donovan, trying to banish a certain constrained tone from his voice.

"No," replied the doctor. "And I should not have spoken now unless you had led me up to it. There are some things, Donovan, for which it is well to 'hope and quietly wait.' I am glad you have spoken. Of course such a change as you speak of is infinitely hard, but if the lesson of life be thoroughly to learn that truth of Father and child, we shall not grudge the difficulty we find in learning it."

"If it seemed the least probable that one ever could learn it," said Donovan, sadly. "But I own that I don't see my way to doing so."

Never was there a time when I realised so well the beauty of Christianity, or felt so anxious to prove my own creed false, but yet never was there a time when the usual belief seemed to me more glaringly illogical, more impossible to hold. You don't know what it is to toss about in a sea of doubts. I had rather have my old hard and fast security in the material present, than flounder in this cobweb like my wasp friend just now."

"Not if the old belief was a mistake and delusion, which for aught you know it is," replied the doctor. "Besides, to take your wasp as a parable, its floundering was of some avail, it proved its need of a rescuer, and the rescuer came—one who could sympathise even with a vicious, stinging, six-legged ne'er-do-weel."

"But all I have got is a mere desire."

"Quite so, a desire to find the truth,—the right thing to start with."

"No, it seems to me only a half-selfish desire to prop up a beautiful legend, a discontent with the truths of science."

"I should call it a natural and by no means selfish desire, and an inevitable discovery that Science, great, and noble, and mighty as she is, cannot satisfy all a man's needs."

"If you could give us scientific proof in religion, then belief might be possible," said Dono-

van, his voice losing all its constraint and changing to almost painful earnestness. "But see what a contrast there is—in science all is proved with exquisite clearness, in religion there is absolutely no proof. I am crazy with sorrow, and a man comes to me and says, 'Be comforted, we are immortal;' I ask for proof, and he tells me it is probable, and instances the case of the grub and the butterfly. Will that argument comfort a man in bereavement?"

"No, for it begins at the wrong end," said the doctor. "There *must* be faith before there can be belief. As to mathematical proof, of course it is impossible when you are not treating of mathematical subjects or dimensions, but the absolute conviction of the existence of God will be as entirely independent of proof as my absolute conviction that my wife is true to me."

Donovan did not speak, he seemed rather staggered by the breadth of this assertion, not having as yet grasped the fact that the "truth" which he was struggling after was not so much concerned with intellectual difficulties to be overcome as with the awaking of a spirit which slept.

"There are thousands of things of the truth of which we are perfectly convinced, and which we nevertheless fail to prove like a mathe-

matical problem," continued the doctor. "Take the case of the great heiress, Miss C——, whom I am now going to visit. We will suppose that she falls in love with a penniless man; her parents laugh at the affair, and bring forward the usual arguments: 'My dear, he only wants your money, he is not in love with you.' All the time the girl knows perfectly well that these arguments are false, and she asserts, boldly, 'He does love me, I know he loves me,' but she can give no scientific proof of this love, though it is to her the most intense reality, a reality that alters all her world. It seems to me to hold true that all things connected with the highest instincts of our life—merely as natural beings, I mean, you know—are incapable of mathematical or even experimental proof. But now-a-days people are so apt to make the most sacred things mere blocks on which to chop logic, that a morbid and unreasonable desire rises to have everything explained to us in black and white."

"But religious people are so dogmatic; they assert 'this is so, that is so, believe it or perish!'" complained Donovan. "I mean the ordinary run; I don't call you a religious person."

"Thank you," said the doctor, laughing. "But surely, Donovan, you used to be; I don't say you are now, but a very short time ago you

were quite as dogmatic as anyone, and asserted 'there is no spirit because everything is matter, no supernatural because everything is natural.'

"Yes, I plead guilty to that, and could half wish now to fall back on the old convictions. There are too many inexplicable mysteries in religion; I shall never get further than this fog of agnosticism."

"Are there no inexplicable mysteries to an atheist?" said the doctor, quietly. "How do you explain the existence of that immaterial thing the will? Science can tell us absolutely nothing with regard to it, but you are the last person who would deny its existence; on the contrary, without any proof you have a stronger belief in the power and functions of the will than anyone I know."

"Because I know—I *feel* its existence."

"Quite so, and just in the same way, though science can't demonstrate to me the existence of God, I know and feel His existence," replied the doctor. "Or to take another argument which is often used: some one asserts that there can be no Creator of the universe, because the idea of such a Being is not mentally presentable; yet one of the greatest men of science of the present day is obliged to own that *consciousness* is not mentally presentable, although it exists."

"I see you have faced all these questions," said Donovan, his sense of union with his friend deepening. "From what I saw before knowing you, I should have said that Christians accepted their belief on authority, and stopped as wrong or presumptuous all free thought and inquiry."

"I believe we all have to 'face' the questions, as you say, sooner or later," said the doctor. "My dear boy, I have been through something of this fog which you are now in, and to a certain extent have felt what you are now feeling."

"You!" exclaimed Donovan, in the greatest surprise.

"Yes, in spite of every possible help in the way of home and education, and speaking as one who has lived through this darkness, I would say to you, don't grudge the suffering or the waiting, but go on patiently."

"Go on doubting?" questioned Donovan.

"Go on living—by which I mean doing your duty," replied the doctor. "Depend upon it, Donovan, that's the only thing to be clung to at such a time—the rightness of right is, at least, clear to you."

"That much is clear, yes," said Donovan, musingly, "for the rest, I suppose the humiliation of uncertainty is good for one's pride, the ache of incompleteness wholesomely disagreeable."

"The beginning of health," said the doctor, half to himself; then looking at the unsatisfied face, he added, in his firm, manly voice, "Be patient, my boy."

"Patience implies hope," said Donovan, in a low tone, which veiled very deep feeling. "Now tell me honestly"—he fixed his eyes steadily on Dr. Tremain's face to read its first expression,—“do you think I shall ever get beyond this wretched uncertainty?”

The doctor's face seemed positively to shine, as he replied,

"I am certain you will; sooner or later, here or there, all will be made plain to you. Do you suppose that when we give thanks for the 'redemption of the *world*' we leave you out? Only be patient, and in the right time the 'Truth shall make you free.' In the meanwhile you are not left without one unfailing comfort: you can work, you can act up to your conscience, and to any man who desires to do His will knowledge of the truth is promised. You make me think of the words I used just now, there is a seeming contradiction when we are told 'it is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord.' It seems impossible that waiting for *health* can be 'good,' we wish to have done at once with all weakness, all restrictions; it is not



till later on when we come to look on all things with other eyes that we see the good of the waiting, its very necessity."

There was silence after that for some minutes, one by one the stars were beginning to shine out in the pale sky, the wind ruffled the leaves in the high hedgerows. Star and Ajax trotted on briskly. Everything that night left a lasting impression on Donovan's brain; he could always see that glooming landscape, with the faint starlight and the lingering streaks of gold in the west, always feel the freshness of the evening air which seemed invigorating as the new hope which was just dawning for him. But he was too choked to speak when the doctor paused, too much taken up with the thoughts suggested to him, to care to put anything of himself into expression. Presently they came to a gate; he sprang out to open it. Then, as they drove up to the house, the doctor said,

"I shall be half an hour, I daresay, so, if you like, drive on to the post-office."

The postman did not come to Porthkerran on Sunday, and Donovan, glad to be of any use, readily assented to the doctor's plan, and drove on to the post-town—St. Kerran's. His mind was still full of the subject they had just been discussing, and half absently he drew up at

the private door of the office and asked for the Trenant letters; it was an understood thing that the doctor called for them at any time he pleased; the head of the post-office, though something of a Sabbatarian, bowed civilly and went in search of them, leaving the door open, perhaps to air the house, perhaps that the strains of one of Wesley's hymns which his children were singing might reach the ears of the stranger who held the reins. But Donovan's thoughts were far away, and the braying harmonium had no power to recall him to the present. In a few moments the man came out of the office, there were two letters in his hand. Donovan took them, hastily glancing at the directions by the light of the street lamp; one was for Dr. Tremain, the other was directed to "D. Farrant, Esq." A certain pleasurable sensation stole over him, mingled with surprise, for the writing was Adela's. She would send him news of his mother, and though still only half allowing it to himself Donovan did care for his mother.

He paused to read the letter by one of the carriage-lamps as soon as he had left the streets of St. Kerrans behind. Then, still more to his surprise, he found that Adela had only written a note, just explaining that the enclosed was from Mrs. Farrant.

The pretty but meaningless characters recalled him to his school-days, when the arrival of his mother's occasional letters had generally been the cause of more pain than pleasure. Things were different now. The letter was very different.

"MY DEAR DONOVAN,

"Since Dr. Tremain's visit in the summer, I have felt very anxious about you ; but it is some comfort that we know where you are, and Adela has promised that she will direct and post this to you. I am not, as you know, a free agent. I have been shocked to think of the straits you have been reduced to, and send you in this letter £20, which is all I could save from the personal allowance my husband makes me. I have been very poorly for some time. We are thinking of spending the winter abroad. Poor Fido died last week, and I am still feeling the shock. Doery has an attack of rheumatism, and her temper is very trying ; but Phœbe, who is now my maid, is a great comfort to me. Forgive this short letter, but I do not feel equal to writing any more to-day.

"With love, believe me,

"Your affectionate mother,

"HONORA FARRANT."

The saving of that money was the first volun-

tary act of self-denial which Mrs. Farrant had ever made. Donovan knew how to appreciate such unusual thought; the letter, which might to some have seemed uninteresting and self-engrossed, meant a great deal to him, for was it not more than he had ever dreamed of receiving?

When Dr. Tremain re-joined him, he saw at once that something must have happened to raise his spirits in a most unusual degree.

"You found some letters?" he asked, as they drove home.

"One from my mother," said Donovan, without any comment, but in a voice which spoke volumes.

"I am very glad," said the doctor, warmly.

"She has sent me some money," resumed Donovan, "for which, of course, I care less than for the letter; it will be a great help, though. £20 will get me some books, and then, if I can only get a scholarship, I shall manage well enough. If not, I shall take to the sixpence-a-day mode of life."

"I'm afraid, even if you get a scholarship, you'll find very rigid economy necessary," said the doctor, unable to suppress an angry thought of Ellis Farrant's calm enjoyment of his unjust gains, but too prudent to allude to a subject which his guest seemed to have willed to put altogether away.

"Oh! I know I shall only have enough for the necessaries of life," said Donovan. "But Waif and I can put up with the loss of a few comforts."

"Bones and cigars to wit?" said the doctor.

"Bones are cheap luxuries," replied Donovan, laughing. "As to cigars, I've given up smoking for the last three months, so that will be no new privation. Oh! we shall scrape through well enough."

The doctor then fell back to reminiscences of his own hospital career, which, stimulated by Donovan's questions, lasted till they reached Trenant. The rest of the party had returned from church; they found themselves just in time for that most restful part of the Sunday, when no one was busy, when the unity of the household was most apparent, when the reality of the peace and love which reigned was most strongly borne in upon Donovan. To-night there was a tinge of regret over all, for was not this his last evening with them? He did not speak much to Gladys, but followed her everywhere with his eyes, and when Dick asked for music took his place by the piano, turning over a portfolio of songs while Gladys played the "Pastoral Symphony." When it was ended, he took up his favourite song, Blumenthal's "Truth shall thee Deliver."

"May we have this?" he asked, hoping that he had not overstepped those incomprehensible boundaries which marked off Sunday from week-day music.

But Gladys was well content to sing Chaucer's beautiful old song, since Mrs. Causton was not there to be shocked, and perhaps, in her low sweet voice, she gave Donovan the best counsel he could have had for his new start in life. The quaint words lingered long after in his memory.

"Fly from the press, and dwell with soothfastness,  
Suffice unto thy good, though it be small.

. . . . .

Rede well thyself that other folks canst rede,  
And truth shall thee deliver, it is no drede.

"That thee is sent receive in buxomness,  
The wrestling of this world asketh a fall ;  
Here is no home, here is but wilderness ;  
Forth, pilgrim, forth ! Best out of thy stall !  
Look up on high and thank the God of all,  
Waive thy lusts, and let thy ghost thee lead,  
And truth shall thee deliver, it is no drede."

The following morning Star and Ajax were once more bearing Dr. Tremain and his guest to St. Kerrans ; the ivy-grown house was left behind, and with Nesta's appealing "Come back adain very soon !" ringing in his ears, and a last smile from Gladys to fortify him, Donovan began the next era of his life.

## CHAPTER II.

## A CROWN OF FIRE.

You well might fear, if love's sole claim  
 Were to be happy ; but true love  
 Takes joy as solace, not as aim,  
 And looks beyond, and looks above ;  
 And sometimes through the bitterest strife first learns to  
     live her highest life.

If then your future life should need  
 A strength my life can only gain  
 Through suffering, or my heart be freed  
 Only by sorrow from some stain,  
 Then you shall give, and I will take, this crown of fire for  
     love's dear sake.

A. A. PROCTER.

YORK Road, Lambeth, is not the most cheerful of thoroughfares ; its chief enlivenment consists of the never-ending succession of cabs bound for the Waterloo Station, and its sombre, narrow-windowed houses are eminently dull. Here, however, Donovan took up his abode, and with the advantages of all Stephen Causton's unused books spent the first year of his course.

Here he worked early and late ; here he practised plain living and high thinking ; here he struggled, fought, and doubted.

In spite of many drawbacks, however, this first year of real work was one of the most contented years he had ever spent ; he had great powers of application, in spite of his desultory education, and he worked now with a will—worked with no let or hindrance, for duty was plainly marked out for him, and he had comparatively few temptations or distractions. After the excitement of the successful competition for a scholarship was over, the days and weeks passed by in uneventful monotony, broken occasionally by an unaccountable craving for his old pastime, to be fought with and conquered, or by one of those darker times in his inner life, when the sense of incompleteness, the oppression of the impenetrable veil which shrouded him in ignorance, outweighed his hope, and left him a prey to blank despondency. From such interruptions he would free himself by an effort of will, and resuming his work, became after each struggle more absorbed and interested in it.

Then, too, the thought of Gladys was never far from him ; her memory filled his solitude, and made it no longer solitary ; her sunshiny face haunted his dull rooms, and made their



unloveliness lovely. Had Donovan been at all given to self-scrutiny, had he ever analysed his feelings or followed out the dim glory of the present into a possible future, he would have realised at once the insuperable barrier which lay between him and his love; but he lived in the present—lived, and worked, and loved, and lacking the dangerous habit of self-inspection, he drifted on, happily unconscious that he was nearing the rapids.

But that brief happiness, heralding as it did a sharp awaking and a terrible void, did a great deal for him; it gave him a momentary insight into the "Beauty and the blessedness of life," and it made his ideal of womanhood a lofty ideal. The truest of truths is, that in nature there is no waste, and in regretting what seems like prodigality, we sometimes forget those hidden results which are none the less real and vital because they lie deep down beneath the surface.

"The old order changeth, yielding place to new,  
And God fulfils himself in many ways."

At length, when the summer days were growing long, and London was becoming intolerably hot, when even congenial work became a species of drudgery, and "much study a weariness of the flesh," the hospital term ended, and Donovan, who had promised to spend the long vaca-

tion with the Tremains, set off for Porthkerran.

Very natural and home-like did the little Cornish village seem, and, after his long months of solitude, the bright, merry family life was delightful. Nesta had grown, but was still the household baby, and not yet able to say her gs; the two schoolboys were at home for the holidays, and made the house unusually noisy; the doctor had added photography to his many hobbies, and Mrs. Tremain, with the cares of half the village on her mind, seemed still as ready as ever to sympathise with everyone.

And Gladys?

Gladys was changed. Donovan felt that at once. Her eyes seemed to have deepened, she was less talkative, she was even a little shy with him. The last time he had returned to Porthkerran she had greeted him with delighted warmth, had called him by his Christian name. This time she was very quiet and wholly undemonstrative, and when her face was in repose there lurked about it a shade of wistfulness—almost of sadness. She had not lost her characteristic sunshine of manner, but the sunshine was no longer constant, and often grave shadows of thought stole over her fair face. No one but a very close observer would have noticed the change in her, but Donovan, who was always very much alive to

the traces of character revealed in manner and expression, felt at once that the Gladys he met at the beginning of that long vacation was not the Gladys he had left in October. Her mind had grown and expanded, but what had brought that shade of sadness to her face? Her life was apparently so cloudless, what unknown source of anxiety could there be to trouble her?

From the very first evening that question lay in his mind, but only as a wonder, not as an anxiety. It was all so peaceful and satisfying here at Porthkerran, he could not brood over anything as he might have done had he been alone. The happiness of being near Gladys blinded him for the time to everything else, the very doubts and questionings which beset him at every turn in his ordinary life seemed left behind; for one delicious month he was supremely happy. He drove out with the doctor, played lawn tennis, romped with the children, gave Gladys lessons in Euclid, read, walked, boated with her, for it invariably happened that, although they went out a large party, the boys and the younger children kept pretty much to themselves, leaving Donovan and Gladys to almost daily *tête-à-têtes*.

If Gladys had been an ordinary girl, Donovan would probably have seen far sooner all the dangers of their present intercourse; but she

was so simple-minded and maidenly, so entirely void of all desire to draw attention to herself, that it seemed the most natural thing in the world to make her his confidante. Who was so quick to sympathise with him as his ideal? Was it not right that he should tell her of his difficulties, his interests, his schemes for the future? If their conversation had ever even bordered on sentiment he might have realised that he was putting her in a false position, but it never did. They talked on subjects grave and gay, discussed religion and politics, argued earnestly or merrily on every imaginable topic, each with a hardly confessed interest in the other's opinion. But Donovan was still at times conscious of a certain reticence in Gladys which he had not before noticed; in their most interesting talks he was often checked by an unexpressed yet very real barrier—a "hitherto thou shalt come, but no further"—which baffled him, and generally produced an unsatisfied silence, always broken by a somewhat irrelevant speech or suggestion from Gladys.

Mrs. Causton was away from home. Stephen, who, after months of suffering, had just recovered from his attack of ophthalmia, had gone for a voyage with his father, and would not return till the beginning of the October term; and his mother, being a good deal worn

out with her constant attendance on him, had gone abroad with some friends for a thorough rest and change of scene. Donovan's stay at Trenant was therefore free from all interruptions, and there was, moreover, no worldly-wise or prudent on-looker who could hint to Dr. Tremain the exceeding likelihood that his little daughter might think too much of that "dangerously handsome guest," who, in former years, had been the terror of all the careful mothers in the neighbourhood of Oakdene.

But no unreal state of things can last, and even in the absence of prudence and Mrs. Caus-ton, the awakening from that summer dream came at length.

It seemed as if a glamour had been cast over the whole household in those sunny August days, never even at Trenant had there been such thorough enjoyment of life; meals *al fresco*, music, moonlight walks by the sea, and boundless home mirth and good humour.

One sunny afternoon the whole family were gathered together in the orchard. There among the daisies, and buttercups, and the grass—the children's favourite playground—Dr. Tremain had planted his photographic apparatus, and, with a leafy background, was preparing to take a group. It was the first attempt he had made at anything of the kind. His victims had

hitherto been single, but this afternoon he had induced the whole "kit," as he expressed it, to be immortalised, and with much fun and laughter they all tried to arrange themselves, an attempt fraught with the direst failure.

"Not an idea as to artistic grouping among you!" exclaimed the doctor, emerging from his black-velvet shroud. "You must be much nearer together, too. You boys in the background. Ah! now that is much better. Now you do look like living beings instead of mummies. Look, mother, if you can without disturbing yourself."

Mrs. Tremain turned round to see the group behind her, who, in disarranging themselves, had fallen into natural attitudes. Donovan had taken Nesta on to his shoulder, Gladys was holding up a rose which the little girl had dropped, and for which she now stretched out one fat, dimpled hand, while Donovan by sudden and unexpected movements always prevented her from reaching it.

"There! that will do!" said the doctor. "Stand exactly as you are. Keep still, and don't laugh, Nesta. Now then!"

Half a minute's breathless silence followed, Nesta relieving herself by holding on with desperate firmness to Donovan's hair, and nearly upsetting Gladys' gravity by the resolute way

in which she pressed her lips together to prevent the laughter from escaping.

The moment they were released there was a chorus of inquiry—who had moved? who had kept still? who had smiled? While Donovan, Gladys, and Nesta relieved themselves by a hearty laugh over the difficulty and absurdity of their positions.

“If I come out with a right eyebrow drawn up like a Chinese, and an expression of Byronic gloom, you’ll understand that it is all Nesta’s fault,” said Donovan. “Remember from henceforth, Nesta, that hair should be lightly handled.”

“And now I shall det my rose,” shouted Nesta, triumphantly, making a sudden raid downwards. She succeeded this time, captured the rose, and after much teasing on Donovan’s part and baby coquetting on hers, ended by fastening it in his button-hole.

The doctor returned in a few minutes in a state of great excitement. The negative was excellent. He would not trouble them to sit again, but he wanted Donovan to help him in some of the mysterious processes in the little black den he had consecrated to his new hobby.

By the time this work was over, it was nearly four o’clock. The doctor was called out, and Donovan, finding there were visitors in the

drawing-room, sauntered out again with a book under his arm. In the orchard, however, he unexpectedly found Gladys. She was sitting at the little rustic table under the old apple-tree, her sleeves tucked up, and her white hands busily occupied in stoning some peaches which were piled up on a great blue willow-pattern dish in front of her.

She made a very pretty picture sitting there in her cool, creamy-white dress, a stray sunbeam glancing every now and then through the flickering leaves above, and making gold of her brown hair.

"You should have been photographed with your dish of peaches," said Donovan, drawing up a garden-chair to the other side of the table.

"Cook is in despair about the preserving, so I'm getting these ready for her," explained Gladys. "Have some, won't you?"

"No, thank you, I'm no fruit-eater; but let me help you."

"Read to me, and then I shall work faster. Mother and I were reading George Eliot's 'Spanish Gypsy;' do you know it? Oh! but you have a book, I see; read me that instead."

Donovan laughed.

"I'm afraid you would scarcely thank me for reading you Heath's 'Minor Surgery.' Let us have the 'Spanish Gypsy.' You are near



the end, I see ; just give me an idea about the characters. Who is Don Silva ?”

“He is a Spanish nobleman in love with Fedalma, the daughter of a Moorish chief. Silva renounces Christianity, and promises to serve and obey the Moor, so that he may not be separated from Fedalma. This is the place—” she handed the book to him, and Donovan, taking it, began the scene in which Don Silva, tortured by seeing the martyrdom of Father Isidor, breaks his promise of fealty to the Moor.

He was not exactly a good reader ; he was sometimes abrupt, sometimes hurried, but he had a beautiful voice, which went far towards making up for any other defects. As he read the wonderful parting scene between Silva and Fedalma, when in obedience to the will of the dead chief, and for the good of the Moorish people, they agree to part for ever, Gladys felt that his whole soul was being thrown into what he read. Involuntarily her hands ceased their mechanical work ; though she could hardly have explained the reason even to herself, this reading was becoming a slow agony to her. Donovan’s face was kindling with enthusiasm, there was an almost terrible ring in his voice as he read the closing scene ; she knew that while her heart was crying out against the bitterness of such a renunciation,

he was feeling only its intense beauty and worth.

Neither of them spoke when the poem was finished; Donovan, as if entirely engrossed with it still, and forgetful that he was not alone, turned the pages over again, reading half to himself passages which had struck him. Gladys, troubled by her own agitation, heard as in a dream, till a sudden deepening of tone recalled her fully to the present. Donovan was reading the parting words of Don Silva.

"Each deed  
That carried shame and wrong shall be the sting  
That drives me higher up the steep of honour  
In deeds of duteous service."

He closed the book after that and sat musing. Then, looking up with the light of enthusiasm still in his face, he said,

"That is a wonderful scene; it is like a bit of Sebastian Bach, a sort of mental tonic."

Gladys' eyes were full of tears, but for that reason she was the more anxious to speak unconcernedly; she hurried out the first trite sentence which came into her head.

"It is so terribly sad."

"Yes, sad but grand."

Somehow, as he spoke, Gladys was constrained to look at him, and, as she met his grave, deep eyes, there rose in her an inexplicable

longing to make him express at least pity for the suffering involved by this sacrifice he so much admired.

"But surely, surely it was a cruel thing to sacrifice their very lives to an only possible good?" she said, pleadingly.

"I don't think you put it quite truly," he replied; "they renounced their own happiness for the general good of that generation certainly, probably of many generations."

"You speak of happiness as if it were such a little thing to give up," said Gladys; "I suppose it is selfish to think of it, but—but—oh! I hope there are not many Fedalmas in the world."

She was entirely unconscious of the pain which lurked in the tone of this almost passionate utterance, she scarcely knew that it was an aching dread in her own heart which prompted her words, she only felt constrained by some unknown power to plead with Donovan. But it was at that very moment, when she herself was least conscious in the present of her love to him, that he realised the truth.

He had hitherto loved her as an ideal, loved her with little thought of the future, never even framed to himself the idea that she could possibly love him. Now there surged over him a very flood of bliss—joy such as he had never

imagined possible. In one instant countless visions of dazzling happiness rose before him. She, his ideal, his queen, loved him! How he knew it he could not have explained, but he did know it! Had his unspoken love drawn her heart to his? How came it that she loved him? Oh! unspeakable rapture! one day she might be all his own!

But the moment that thought of the future came to him, it was as if an icy hand had suddenly clutched his heart.

The dazzling visions faded, and in their place was only a horror of great darkness, out of which, like a death-knell, his own conscience spoke.

"There is no possible union for you. You would bring her the worst of miseries, perhaps even drag her down to your own hopeless creed."

He was too much stunned to think, but for some time now he had been clinging blindly to duty, had said to conscience, "Call, and I follow," and even in the confusion and anguish of that moment it was made clear to him what he ought to do.

With an effort of will he banished every trace of his real feelings from his face and tone, and answered as quietly as he could Gladys' last remark.

"I didn't mean to underrate happiness, though it certainly is not meant for everyone in the world, unless we find that sacrifice itself is the most real happiness; but I have not found that yet." Then, pushing back his chair, he added, "I think I shall go over to St. Kerrans. I want a good long walk. Can I do anything for you?"

"Nothing, thank you," said Gladys, mechanically taking up and putting down one of the peaches.

Donovan whistled to Waif and walked away in the direction of the house. Gladys sat motionless till the sound of his footsteps died away into silence; then, pushing aside the willow-pattern dish and the fruit, she laid down her head on the table and burst into tears.

Although he had spoken of walking to St. Kerrans, Donovan was too much stunned to know or care in what direction he went. He closed the front door behind him and strode rapidly through the village, up the steep hill, and along the road leading to the forge. Trevethan, the blacksmith, had become a great friend of his; to-day, however, he had not the slightest intention of going to see him, and, in fact, did not even know that he was passing the forge till the blacksmith's voice fell on his ear.

"Mr. Farrant, I was wanting to speak to ye, sir. Can ye step in a moment?"

"Yes," said Donovan, though he had never felt less inclined to speak to any human being.

"Well, sir, you see it's this way," began Trevethan, putting down his hammer and folding his arms as if in preparation for a lengthy speech. "I've told ye all about my son Jack as left home six years ago, and as I haven't heard from. Well, the Lord be praised, I've heard from 'm now, he's wrote me a fine letter, and sent a Bank o' England note along with it. But, sir, he's not said where he is, except there being 'London' marked on the front of the letter. Knowin' ye knew the place, I thought I'd ask ye how I could best find the lad. London's a big place, ain't it?—a sight bigger than Porthkerran?"

Donovan smiled a little.

"Yes, Trevethan, I'm afraid it'll be very hard to find him. I'll do my best to help you, though. Tell me what he is like."

The blacksmith's powers of description were not great; he knew that Jack was "fine and big," but could not tell the colour of his eyes, or any single peculiarity in his manners or appearance.

"You mustn't be too hopeful," said Donovan; "but I'll keep my eyes and ears open, and do

all I can for you; I'm afraid, though, the only chance of your finding him will be his own voluntary return."

"Thank ye, sir, I'm obliged to ye for your help," said the blacksmith. "And as to hoping, as long as we're sure our hopes is runnin' the same way as the Lord's, I reckon we can't be too hopeful."

Donovan did not speak. He had had many a talk with the old Cornishman, had sometimes laughed at the quaint phrases of his Methodism, but had always admired and revered the man's unswerving faith—faith which had stood fast through countless troubles and losses. He could not help shrewdly surmising that this hope as to finding his son would never be fulfilled, and yet, as he watched the blacksmith's contented face, he felt that his intensely real faith in the inevitable Right which ruled all things was a very enviable possession.

After a little further conversation as to the search for Jack, the smith took up his hammer again, and Donovan took leave of him, and set out once more on his solitary walk. The interruption had quieted him for the time, but, as the consciousness of his pain returned to him, the contrast between his own state of conflict and Trevethan's quiet trust forced itself on him. This unlettered, ignorant old man had

the knowledge which he was hungering and thirsting for, the faith which he would have given the world to possess.

But then with a sudden sharp pang came the full recollection of all that had happened, and his mind became capable of only two ideas—Gladys and pain. He threw himself down on the grassy slope bordering the cliff, and for a time allowed those two presences to work their will on him. Gladys, with her appealing blue eyes, her wistful plea for happiness, and an agonizing consciousness that sorrow and separation must come. As he grew quieter, or, rather, as his thoughts became more clear, he saw as distinctly as he had done when speaking to her in the orchard that union between them was impossible. He remembered the sense of separation that had come to him when Dot had first drifted away into those regions of thought into which he could not follow her. She had not suffered much from their difference of thought, it was true, but then she had been a little child, and there had been only a very few months of that divided thought and interest. If she had been older, his atheism must have been both a sorrow and a perplexity to her. Should he bring such a sorrow into Gladys' life?—should he lay upon her pure heart such a burden as he had to bear? Never! All the



man in him rose at such a thought. It should never be! He got up and began to pace rapidly to and fro, his hands locked tightly together. It was no use idly to wish that he had never seen her; he must go away now, at once—that much was clear. She must learn to forget him. “Oh! I hope there are not many Fedalmas in the world!” her pleading tones rang in his ears, and his hands were clenched more tightly as he realised the pain he must in any case give her.

He must go, but it was hard—bitterly hard. His love was strong and true, no mere weak sentimentality; but it is a cruel tax on love to choose the very plan that will inflict pain on the loved one. The pain may be salutary, wise, necessary for future happiness, but the infliction is keenest suffering.

He knew that he should always love her, but his love must be kept in, restrained; a poor, cramped kind of love it would be, for he could never serve her. Deliberately, of his own accord, he must cut himself off from all but the pain of love. Unless, indeed, this bitter pain proved to be service. There might come a time when she would bless him for what he had done. Some day, when with a husband one with her in every way, and children of her own, learning from their father’s lips the first lessons

of the faith, might she not *then* bless him for the pain of the present? Might not this be his "duteous service"? this the "steep of honour"?

But Donovan was very human; the thought of his own suffering began to appeal to him. The thought of life without Gladys *would* come before him; it hung round him like a heavy pall, shutting out all brightness, all hope of future happiness, all hope—so he thought—of ennobling himself. For was not she the light he had looked to, the goal he had set before him? Now everything was shut out. Blank and black, dreary and hopeless, life stretched out before him.

As he paced up and down battling with himself, his attention was drawn to the little strip of beach at the foot of the cliff; two children were there, laughing, shouting, waving their hands to a fisherman who was just nearing the shore in his boat. The keel grated on the pebbles, the man sprang out. He had not had good luck, his lobster-pots had been empty; but, in spite of it, his voice was hearty and cheerful as he hailed the little ones. Donovan saw them run to meet him, heard their cry of "Father! father!" Another sore regret surged in upon him then. He could never have a child of his own, no child would ever call him "father." He might love and be beloved by other people's

children, but the fatherhood which this honest fisherman could enjoy might never be his. And then the terribly tempting thought of what might be, the haunting happiness of the home, the wife that might be his, came again to him with double force.

It is not so hard to bear what the force of circumstance brings; the Christian, the Fatalist, the Agnostic, all from a variety of reasons learn the sort of endurance which life can hardly fail to teach, and endure joyfully, abjectly, or doggedly; but deliberately to choose the pain, that is not easy, not easy because it is God-like. Only by slow painful degrees can we fight our way upward and break loose from the clinging hold of self-love.

Donovan had now fully faced all sides of this great question of his life; again he came to the decision which must be made at once and for ever. And now for the second time out of the depths he sent up a cry to the Unknown. No "sense of sin" had prompted either of those hardly conscious appeals; his first prayer had been that Dot might be taken from him into peace; his second that he might have strength of will to leave Gladys. That will of his which had failed—he distrusted it now!

The battle ended at last. Slowly and firmly

he pronounced the "I will" which must banish him for ever from all that he loved.

The sun was just setting when he reached St. Kerrans; he had struck inland from the Porthkerran Cliff road, and had gone across country, Waif following him through stubble-fields and over hedges and West-country walls with untiring perseverance. The shops in the little town were still open, for it was market-day. Donovan went as usual to the post-office, and there to his surprise found a letter for himself—an exceedingly rare event. He opened it and read the contents with as much curiosity as he was capable of feeling about anything just then.

"S—— House, Freshwater, I. W., August 27.

"MY DEAR DONOVAN,

"You may very possibly have forgotten an old friend of yours, who, however, has often thought of you in the long interval which has passed since we met. I saw your cousin, Miss Adela Farrant, a few weeks ago, and she told me of your whereabouts. I am very glad you are thinking of entering the medical profession. Has your vacation begun yet? If so, will you not come and spend a week or two with me? Plenty of boating and

fishing for you, and as much or as little as you like of an old man's society.

"Yours very truly,

"H. G. HAYES.

"P.S.—I am only here for three weeks, so come at once if you can."

Here was a real help to his resolution, an invitation which would blind the Tremains to the strangeness of his abrupt departure. He looked at his watch; it only wanted two or three minutes to the time when the telegraph-office closed. Should he go back and send the message which would fix his fate? He wavered a minute, but finally returned to the office, snatched up pencil and paper, and, feeling much as if he were signing his own death-warrant, wrote the following words—"Your letter forwarded to me from London. Many thanks for invitation. I will come to-morrow evening." The telegram dispatched, he set off at a sharp pace for Porthkerran, along the familiar road which had so many associations for him—the first meeting with Dick, his last return to Trenant only a month ago, and—most vivid recollection of all—that drive with the doctor one Sunday evening in September, when they had spoken of his doubts and difficulties, when Dr. Tremain had spoken so hopefully, so

confidently of the light which would come to him. Poor Donovan! he did not feel any such confidence now. Black darkness seemed gathering round him. In renouncing Gladys, he felt that all which had hitherto been most helpful to him would be swept away, that he should be left entirely alone to face "the spectres of the mind." Happily he saw the danger of dwelling on this thought, however, and, putting it from him, he strode rapidly along, wondering how he could best veil his feelings from Gladys, or arouse least suspicion in the minds of her parents.

At last, in the twilight evening, he reached Trenant. How little he had dreamed that the sight of the gabled house, with its mantling ivy and cheerful lighted windows, would ever give his heart such a stab of pain! Well, he must think as little as he could, and just *do*. It was rather a relief to him on entering the drawing-room to find old Admiral Smith there. The doctor had his microscope out, Mrs. Tremain was working, Gladys was playing chess with Bertie.

"Here you are at last!" was the general exclamation. "Where have you been? And how tired you look!"

"It was very rude of me to cut dinner," said Donovan, shaking hands with the admiral,

"but I felt so inclined for a good long walk."

"After your cramping position in the photograph, I suppose," said the doctor, laughing. "You are in great disgrace with Nesta though, for having gone without wishing her good night."

"You will have some supper now?" said Mrs. Tremain, with her hand on the bell.

"No, thank you," said Donovan. "I really want nothing. Let me have the rest of the evening with you all, for I'm afraid this will be my last."

"Your last evening!" exclaimed the doctor, greatly astonished.

"Well, at St. Kerrans I found a letter from a very old friend of mine, Mr. Hayes, a neighbour of ours at Oakdene. He is staying in the Isle of Wight, and wrote to ask if I would come down and see him. His time is limited, so I was obliged to answer him at once, and promise to go.

"How beastly!" exclaimed the two school-boys.

"Must you really go to-morrow?" said Mrs. Tremain, regretfully. "It is very hard on us to be robbed of so much of your visit, but I suppose we must not grudge you to an older friend."

"Mr. Hayes was very kind to me in the old

time. I think it is right that I should go to see him, though of course I——”

He broke off abruptly, unable to speak any trite common-place regret.

He had carefully avoided looking at Gladys, but as the doctor and Mrs. Tremain were still discussing this sudden change of plan with him, Bertie's voice forced itself upon his notice.

“Well, Glad, you *are* a muff! You've let me take your queen, when you might have moved it as easily as possible.”

“I'm very sorry, Bertie. I wasn't thinking,” was the answer.

“It's very dismal indeed,” said the doctor. “However, I suppose we must grin and bear it. You'll come down for the next long vacation anyhow. And we won't allow Mr. Hayes to cheat us a second time. You can go to him for Christmas Day. He is more accessible than we are for a short holiday.”

Gladys sat moving her chessmen mechanically, feeling as if she were in some dreadful dream. What did it all mean? Why was he going away? Had he guessed her secret? had she betrayed herself? No, she thought not, for he looked so perfectly natural, and even as she finished her game, he crossed the room and took the vacant chair beside her, asking in the most ordinary way,



“Did you finish stoning your peaches?”

And then he told her about his talk with Trevethan, and made her describe Jack to him, so that in a very little while her cheeks cooled, and her relief would have been almost happiness, if there had not been the haunting consciousness that this was the last talk she should have with Donovan for a year. Her heart was very heavy. They made her sing, too, which seemed hard, but Admiral Smith was fond of music; she could not refuse. Donovan lit the candles for her, and opened the piano. She turned over her portfolio, but every song seemed to bear some reference to the subject that was filling her heart. However, Admiral Smith decided the question for her.

“Now, Miss Gladys, let us have the ‘Flowers of the Forest.’ That’s the prettiest song ever written, to my mind.”

She got through it somehow, but there was more pathos than she wished in the mournful refrain—

“The flowers of the forest are a’ wede away!”

Donovan never heard that song in after-years without a *serrement de cœur*. As he held the portfolio open for her to put it away, her hand touched his for a minute, he felt that it was icy cold, and a sudden longing to take it in his

almost overmastered him. The old admiral was disappearing with the doctor into the adjoining room, the boys had gone to bed, Mrs. Tremain had just gone into the dining-room to ring the first bell for prayers, these two were quite alone. Why might he not take that poor little cold hand into his and tell her the truth, tell her that he loved her with his whole heart. After all, it was a mere shadow which stood between them! why should he sacrifice his own happiness and hers, because what to her was a conviction was to him a vague uncertainty? He loved her so dearly, why must he be so cruel? It was a moment of terrible temptation. But it was only a moment. With lips firmly pressed together he bent down over her music, turned over the pieces, and not in the least knowing what he had taken up, said rather hurriedly,

“Will you not play something? There will be time for this, I think.”

She sat down again at the piano, and he moved away to the fireplace, waiting there with his head propped between his hands, and steeling himself to endure. Quite unknowingly he had given her a transcription of “O rest in the Lord.” He scarcely heard it, but to her the beautiful air brought infinite comfort. When she had ended it she was quite herself again, and could speak naturally and composedly, and

before many minutes the prayer-bell rang, and she went away, leaving Donovan alone.

That wretched evening ended at length, the last good nights were said, the house had settled down into quiet. But lights burnt long in two of the rooms; in one Donovan, with a rigid face, bent over his dryest medical book, in a vain endeavour to banish thought, in the other Gladys knelt and prayed.

## CHAPTER III.

## GOOD-BYE.

She smiled : but he could see arise  
 Her soul from far adown her eyes,  
 Prepared as if for sacrifice.

She looked a queen who seemeth gay  
 From royal grace alone.

E. B. BROWNING.

WHEN, after spending a winter in the sunny south, beneath clear blue skies and constant sunshine, the traveller returns to the capricious springtide of the north, the violent contrast is very often both dangerous and depressing. Rain and fog and lowering skies seem more noticeable, more unforgettable than before ; east winds, which in former years we had laughed at or ignored, are now an unpleasant reality, and every breath drawn tells only too plainly that, although the heart of the north may be "dark and true and *tender*," its winds are sharp and keen and bitter.

In that one night of suffering Gladys passed as it were from the sunny south to the northern springtide. She woke the next morning fully conscious of the change that had come, wearily, achingly conscious of it. Hitherto her life had been almost untroubled, her sunny temperament made her less susceptible than most are to the small trials and annoyances of life, and now for the very first time there came to her a longing for pause and rest. Every other morning of her life her first healthy waking thought had been a thanksgiving for the happiness of beginning a fresh day, now with a great load on her heart she only longed to shut out the light, to forget a little longer. If only the drama of life would go on without her! If only she might give up her part—her hard difficult part!

It was no use wishing, however. She got up and went straight to the looking-glass to see what sort of face she could bring to that day's work. Somehow her reflection made her angry, the wide, wearied eyes, with their dark circles, the grave lips, the unusual paleness of the whole face. "I will certainly not look like this," she determined, and though as a rule she thought scarcely at all of her appearance, this day she took great pains with herself, put on a pink print dress, which made her look much

less ghostly, fastened a rose in her belt, and ran down to breakfast with an air of assumed cheerfulness little in accordance with her heavy heart.

Donovan was already seated at the table, he was to start in half an hour's time, and the doctor had arranged his rounds so as to drive him first to St. Kerrans Station. There was nothing the least unusual in his voice or manner, he talked on steadily about the Isle of Wight, geological books, fossils, all the most ordinary topics. No one could have guessed in the least that all the time he was bearing the keenest pain, doing the hardest of deeds.

It was not easy to speak quite naturally to Gladys, but silence between them would have been so marked that he was all the more anxious to overcome the difficulty.

"I am afraid the Euclid will come to a standstill," he said, as they stood at the open door waiting for the carriage. "You are safely over the Pons Asinorum, though, which is some consolation."

He had spoken lightly and with a half smile, his tone jarred a little on Gladys. What did it all mean? Did he really care for her? If so, why did he speak like that?

Her father had answered the remark.

"She must wait till the next long vacation

before she becomes a thorough 'blue stocking.' What will you attempt then? Conic sections, I suppose."

Donovan did not answer, but allowed himself to be monopolised by Jackie and Nesta, and Gladys stood leaning against the doorway, feeling sick at heart as she watched their noisy romp, while the sound of wheels grew nearer and nearer. Waif came up to her with low whines of delight and wagging tail. She bent down to pat him with a full-hearted reproach. "What, you too, Waif! Are you so glad to go?" Waif comforted her a little, however, in spite of his eagerness to start, happy Waif who had saved his master's life, who would always be his friend and companion.

A few minutes more and the end had come; she felt her hand taken in a strong, firm grasp, and, looking up, met Donovan's eyes; there was an almost hard look in them which puzzled her utterly, but his voice was pleasant and natural.

"Good-bye," he said. "And if you are seeing Trevethan, please tell him that I'll do my best to find Jack."

"I will," said Gladys, softly. "Good-bye."

"Dood-bye, Mr. Dono, dood-bye," shouted Nesta, as the carriage drove away. "Please lift me up, sissy."

Gladys took the little girl in her arms, and

Nesta threw innumerable kisses after the departing guest; Donovan looked back, smiled, and waved his hand, and a turn in the road soon hid the pony-carriage from sight.

"I am very sorry he has had to go like this," said Mrs. Tremain, re-entering the house. "I think, Gladys dear, you might give the children their lessons early; I shall be glad of your help at the clothing club this morning."

"Very well, mother," said Gladys, obediently, and she went at once with her two little pupils into the school-room, giving all her attention to "Reading without tears."

It was not till night that she had time fairly to face her trouble, and when the work of the day was over she was too weary to think; she shut herself into her little room and threw herself on the bed just as she was, only conscious of relief that at last she might let her face relax, that at last she might be miserable alone. It was bad enough that Donovan should be gone, that for a whole year she should not see him, but the real sting was that he had gone in such a strange way. Could it be that she had mistaken mere friendship for love? Had she given her whole heart to one who merely wanted a good listener, a pleasant companion? Well, it was done now, and there could be no undoing; she loved him, and clung to her love perhaps



all the more closely because of the pain it was bringing her.

Never once did she realise as Donovan had done the impossibility of real union between them. He, knowing all the misery of such differences as had existed between himself and Dot, taking too the darkest view of his own future, had felt his agnosticism to be an insurmountable barrier. But Gladys could not feel this. She saw in Donovan a noble, self-sacrificing character, a resolute cleaving to right at whatever cost to himself, a tenderness to children, a great capability of endurance, an untiring search and desire for truth. Surely the light would come to him, surely already he was far on the road to that knowledge he craved!

And then too she could not help knowing that she had a great influence over him; he had almost told her so in words, and by his questions, his anxiety to learn her opinion, his eagerness to gain her approval had certainly borne it out in actions. Yes, she loved him, was ready to give up everything for him, to leave home, and comfort, and prosperity, to share his poverty, to bear for his sake reproach and suspicion, to be doubted, to be evil spoken of, if only she might bring one ray of light into his gloom, if only by her love she could win him to believe in the everlastingness of love.

It might be a hard life, in some ways it must be lonely, but what was that to her? The mere possibility of bringing any real joy—joy worthy the name—into Donovan's life, outweighed to her all thought of the suffering involved. All *self* suffering that is. If she had known that at that very minute she was giving him the keenest suffering possible, she could not have borne it. But of this naturally she knew nothing, thought in her ignorance that the present pain was almost entirely hers, that in that possible future too the ache of loneliness would be all for her to bear, and in her unselfishness rejoiced in the thought.

Her mind, however, was too healthy to busy itself unduly over the future, the present was to be lived in, she turned back resolutely to make

“The best of ‘now’ and here,”

by which she meant chiefly ceaseless prayers for Donovan, while the daily round of home life went on unaltered. Her bright face was still the sunshine of the house, for gradually the self-pity, the vain regrets, and the useless puzzling over Donovan's change of manner passed away; in the constant communion with the All-Father her love was being perfected.

With Donovan himself matters went more hardly. It could not be otherwise. The

parting which had tried Gladys, had been to him a frightful effort, while the future, which to her was veiled in uncertainty and lightened by hope, was to him one long blank desert of pain.

It was evening by the time he stood on the deck of the little steamer which plied between Lymington and Yarmouth, a dismal evening too, well in accordance with his own feelings. A heavy sea-fog shut out the view, a fine chilling rain fell, the passengers grumbled, two tired children wailed piteously, nurses alternately coaxed and scolded them. At length in the dreary twilight they reached the little port, Donovan rescued his portmanteau from the chaos of luggage and slowly made his way up the long wooden pier, to the old-fashioned coach, which with its patient horses and good-tempered driver stood waiting outside a cheery little inn. The wailing babies were packed away inside, Donovan mounted to the top, where he was presently joined by two or three other men, and by a forlorn little girl who could find no room inside; he held his umbrella over her, and talked to her a little; she looked tired and sad, he had a kind of fellow-feeling for her. Presently all being ready the driver cracked his whip, and the horses started off at

a brisk pace; they were swinging along through narrow country lanes and under dripping trees, till at length the lights of Freshwater shone out in the distance, and gradually the passengers were set down at their various destinations. Before long Donovan's turn came.

"S—— House, sir. Here you are," said the coachman.

He tucked Waif under his arm, wished the little girl good evening and clambered down. The door of the villa was wide open, a flood of light streamed out into the dusky garden, revealing old Mr. Hayes in the doorway. Donovan had fancied himself hopelessly, irrevocably miserable, but he was nevertheless considerably cheered by the old man's hearty welcome; it was after all something to have your hand grasped by an old friend, to be questioned and fussed over, to be taken into a comfortable brightly-lighted room, to sit down to a well spread supper table, and to end the evening with the long foregone luxury of a cigar. Not so romantic perhaps as to pine away in appetiteless melancholy, but more rational and manly.

He made the most of his three weeks' visit, and though the green downs of Freshwater always had for him associations of pain and con-

flict, he yet managed to get some enjoyment and much bodily and mental good from his stay there.

"And have you got your castle in the air, yet?" Mr. Hayes would laughingly ask him.

His face would sadden a little, but he would always answer laughingly that Sanitary Reform was his darling project, or that his pet hobby was the Temperance Cause.

## CHAPTER IV.

## A MAN AND A BROTHER.

Charity is greater than justice? Yes, it is greater, it is the summit of justice—it is the temple of which justice is the foundation. But you cannot have the top without the bottom; you cannot build upon charity. You must build upon justice, for this main reason, that you have not at first charity to build with. It is the last reward of good work. Do justice to your brother (you can do that whether you love him or not), and you will come to love him.

*Wreath of Wild Olive.* RUSKIN.

THE 30th of September was a cold, blowy day, the wind seemed to take a special pleasure in howling and whistling about the dismal lodgings where Donovan was working. It was evening, the table was covered with bulky volumes, with papers of notes and manuscript books; he had always had the faculty of doing with a will whatever he undertook, and he was so absorbed in his work that he scarcely noticed a violent peal at the door-bell; it was not till the howling wind was eddying through the

passage and the infirm fastening of his sitting-room door had succumbed to the blast and burst open, that he became alive to the fact that Stephen Causton was to come up to town that evening, and that this gust of wind probably announced his advent.

It was a blustering arrival altogether, the landlady's welcome was almost lost in the general hubbub. Donovan heard a loud and rather rough voice replying.

"Well, Mrs. Green, how are you? Here, you boy, put down the portmanteau."

Then came a slow counting out of coin.

"Please, sir, it were awful 'eavy," pleaded a shrill voice, "it were fit to break a chap's arm."

"Nonsense," came the loud voice again, "it's not more than three hundred yards from——"

"Good evening," interrupted Donovan, suddenly emerging from the sitting-room, and finding himself in the presence of a light-haired, bushy-whiskered double of Mrs. Causton.

"Oh! good evening," said Stephen, holding out his hand, and hastily glancing at his new companion. "I've all sorts of messages for you from Porthkerran."

Donovan's hands clenched and unclenched themselves. It was a little hard to hear messages from Porthkerran spoken of in such a careless tone.

The little street boy who had carried the portmanteau began to plead again for "another copper or two."

"Nonsense, be off, you beggar!" was Stephen's lordly reply, and he passed into the sitting-room, giving a chagrined exclamation at finding no supper ready for him.

Donovan left the landlady to pacify him, and partly from dislike to the tone which his companion had used, partly from his horror of under-paying labour, made the little street boy happy with a sixpence. Then he pushed the front-door to with a vigorous slam, and slowly returned to the sitting-room.

Stephen, feeling that he had a somewhat taciturn companion, talked more than usual, and pleasantly enough. However much he resembled his mother in face, he was evidently singularly unlike her in every other way, and Donovan was surprised that Mrs. Causton should tolerate such very free and easy manners, or that anyone brought up so strictly should sprinkle his conversation so plentifully with slang and mild oaths. Was this Dick Tremain's specimen of a "mother's son"? Surely he must have broken loose from his leading-strings!

The fact was that Stephen at Porthkerran and Stephen in London were two very different beings; he did not at first intentionally de-



ceive his mother, but inevitably he had struck out into a line of his own widely different from hers. Too weak to care to set up his principles in open defiance he lived a sort of double life, taking his fling when alone, and meekly deferring to his mother's opinion when at Porthkerran. The result of this falseness was most unhappy. Donovan scrutinized his companion's face keenly that first evening, but after all, in spite of the narrow forehead, and the eyes which rarely looked straight into other eyes, he took rather a liking to Stephen—was he not a friend of the Tremains? the one link which might still exist between them.

It was not for some days that he found out the truth about his new companion. He knew that his bringing up had been of the narrowest, and guessed from the very first that he had shaken off the old traditions, and was taking his own way, but it was not all at once that he realised what that way was.

One October evening when the day's lectures were over, and the two had just finished dinner, the conversation drifted somehow to Porthkerran. It was a very chilly night, Stephen had insisted on having a fire, and dragging up an arm-chair to the hearth, sat crouched up like any old man; Donovan, with his feet on the mantelpiece, American fashion, listened silently

to the continuous flow of talk, not taking great note of it until the name of Tremain fell on his ear.

"Johnson's a good enough fellow," Stephen was saying. "Not, perhaps, what Dr. Tremain would approve of, but one can't be so strait-laced as he is."

"The doctor strait-laced!" exclaimed Donovan. "That's the last word you can apply to him. Strait-laced! why, he's the very soul of liberality."

"In some ways," replied Stephen, coolly, "but not all round. I was a year in his surgery, and I can tell you he's not the easiest master to serve. I wouldn't have him know that Johnson and Curtis were my friends for— 'a wilderness of monkeys,' as old Shylock has it. Not that they're either of them bad fellows, but they're the sort that the doctor can't abide."

Donovan only knew the two students by sight, but he was able to guess pretty well to what set they belonged, and he knew that they were probably the very worst friends for anyone so weak-minded as Stephen. The reference to the Tremains, however, brought too many painful thoughts to his mind to admit of his dwelling on his companion's words. He did not speak, and Stephen, thrusting his feet almost under the grate, continued,

"One can't be a slave to another man's opinion, but of course I do try to keep in the doctor's good books, not altogether to please him either. I suppose you saw a good deal of Gladys, didn't you."

"A good deal," replied Donovan, steadily; but as he spoke he swung down his feet from the mantelpiece, and pushing back his chair began to pace up and down the room.

"She's an awfully jolly little thing, isn't she," continued Stephen. "And she's grown uncommonly pretty too."

Donovan longed to kick him; Stephen talked on in easy unconsciousness.

"Her colouring's rather too high, certainly, but she's a very fine girl. I lost my heart to her years ago, and though of course I've had half a dozen flames since, not one of them was fit to be compared with her. I'd a fortnight at Porthkerran before coming up here, you know, and jolly enough it was too. Between ourselves my mother is quite ready to help me to see plenty of Gladys Tremain, nothing would please her so well as to have Gladys for a daughter-in-law, and, by Jove, she'd make a stunning good wife. I don't believe she dislikes me either, she was much more ready to be talked to than usual. We shouldn't be half badly matched. What do you think?"

"Discuss your love affairs with anyone you please, but not with me," said Donovan, reining in his voice with difficulty. "You ought to have found out before now that I'm made of cast iron, and chosen your confidant better."

"Well, all right, I won't bore you," replied Stephen; "where are you off to? don't go."

"I can't read yet, I'm going out."

"Johnson said he'd look in this evening, we'll have a round of 'Nap,' that'll be better than turning out on such a night as this."

"You won't play while I'm in the house," said Donovan, decidedly. "Look here, Causton, just understand once for all that if you bring those fellows here we dissolve partnership at once. I can get rooms elsewhere, but get into that set I will not."

"All right, my dear fellow, don't get into such a fume," said Stephen, trying to yawn carelessly. "They shan't come here if you feel so strongly about it, though after all you don't know that we shouldn't play for three-penny points."

"I wasn't born yesterday," said Donovan, shortly, and with that he went out, snatched up his hat, and, slamming the front door after him, hurried out into the street.

His brain was in a whirl of confusion, he strode on recklessly down the dingy street, out



Yes, after all, with him lay the fault. What right had he to be angry because another man ventured to admire Gladys? What concern was it of his? Had he not resolved on absolute sacrifice of self?—yet here was the wily self coming to the fore again, firing up indignantly because another man desired what he had renounced.

And Stephen was not so entirely despicable as in his rage he had imagined him to be. At any rate he had far more right to think of marrying Gladys than Donovan himself had. What business had he, of all people, to fly into a passion because one worthier than himself had stepped forward? Enjoyment, happiness, was not for him; a line of plodding duty—of entire sacrifice—was the course marked out instead. The “steep of honour” was before him, his reward must be in the “deeds of duteous service” themselves.

It should be so. The fire of indignation died down, leaving him quiet, passive, horribly depressed, but still resolutely determined to keep on in this dreary round of duty.

The cold night wind blowing up from the river helped to brace him for the struggle: air and wide open space had always a very strange influence over him, this evening he felt their influence more than ever. The river flowed

into the broad road, past the brilliant lights of Sanger's Circus, past the hospital to Westminster Bridge. Then he paused, and leaning on the southern parapet, in the very place where Noir Frewin had met him years ago, he let the wild confusion work itself out into distinct realities.

This fellow loved, or professed to love Gladys; the thought was simply intolerable to him. He loved her, but spoke of her as Donovan would hardly have spoken of Waif, loved her, and, sanctioned by his mother, evidently meant to woo her! And—worst misery of all!—what was there to prevent it? he was absolutely helpless, he could only look on in dumb despair. Never more could he go to that Cornish home, never more see the face of the woman he loved, but he should hear of Stephen Causton's visits, *he* might go there with impunity, he might spend long hours with Gladys, might woo her and win her! It was maddening! the thought of it roused all the stormiest passions in Donovan's heart. He absolutely hated Stephen, hated and despised him, dwelt with bitterest scorn on his weakness, his many failings. The fiend of jealousy rode rampant over every better feeling, quenched for the time all that was noble in him. Only for a time, however; before long he was taxing himself—not Stephen—with cowardly weakness.

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darkly onward, the lights on its margin threw their yellow reflection in a second golden chain, to the left stood up the sombre towers of the Abbey, and the huge mass of the Houses of Parliament loomed grandly out of the darkness. Sounds of life and traffic rose, too, out of the night. Trains flashed like fiery serpents over Charing Cross Bridge, with shriek of whistle and snort of engine; carriages, horses, passengers of every description hurried on. After all it was a grand old world, no world of units, there was a national life to be lived as well as a private life, there were national grievances which would outweigh and eclipse all private grievances, there was—even to a sometime misanthrope—the enthusiasm of humanity, a wonderful panacea for self pain.

He was conscious of that widening influence, but more conscious of a sudden contraction caused by the sound of a voice he knew. Glancing round he saw Stephen and two other men within a few yards of him.

“No, I’ve never played there,” Stephen was saying.

“Time you were initiated, then,” replied one of his companions. “Smithson will be there by nine; he’s better at billiards than anyone I know, a regular——”

The rest of the sentence died away in the

distance, there was a general laugh, and then Donovan heard no more.

He watched the three as they crossed the bridge, and saw them turn to the right; he guessed well enough where they were going. It was quite evident that Stephen was getting completely under the influence of Johnson and the set to which he belonged. In an instant all the thoughts of brotherhood, freedom, and self-sacrifice were banished from Donovan's mind, and a very devilish idea took possession of him.

Stephen was deplorably weak-minded, he would get completely under Johnson's thumb, would very likely go to the bad altogether, and, if so, he would unfit himself for Gladys. In one moment there rose before him a picture of the future, Stephen the orthodox dragged down into disgrace and rejection; himself, an agnostic indeed, but the model of virtue and morality, rewarded by success.

It was a fiendish imagination, lasting only for a minute; he dashed it down, and stood shamefaced and full of self-loathing in the world of realities again.

The Westminster chimes rang out into the night. Big Ben boomed the hour—nine of those deep, reverberating strokes fell on Donovan's ear. Before the last echo had died into

silence he had made up his mind what to do. With the natural instinct of a generous character, he, having wronged Stephen in thought, was anxious now to redress the wrong by some kind of service. Thoughts of the Tremains, too, came crowding into his mind; Stephen was their friend, the doctor's godson; if he went wrong the Tremains would be infinitely sorry. He must at any rate try to get him away from that set into which he had fallen, make some effort to dissuade him from a course which would so thoroughly shock his mother.

He hurried along with rapid strides, trying not to think how much he disliked the task before him, racking his brain for some excuse by which to draw Stephen away, at any rate for this evening. He had only a few minutes in which to form his plans; before long he had passed under the dark railway bridge, and had turned up Villiers Street. He had not been in this particular place since the miserable New Year's Eve just before his illness, when his one longing had been to stifle his remorse, and to still those awful recollections of Dot's death-bed; an extraordinary change had passed over him since then, but he did not think of that himself, or contrast the present Donovan with the past, only as he went through the swing doors into the brightly-lighted saloon, a vague

association of pain and misery came to him, a sort of ghost of the past seemed to hover about the place.

His quick eye had soon taken a survey of the tables, and had descried Stephen Causton cue in hand; the place was crowded; he made his way towards him and stood for some time watching him in silence; he was betting on his own play with despicable rashness, and he was playing exceedingly ill. Donovan had an insane desire to snatch the cue from him and play himself, it was most irritating to watch the game.

Presently he became conscious that some one's eyes were riveted upon him, he glanced round in involuntary reply to that strange magnetic influence. It was only the marker, a dark-haired man, with a face which somehow seemed familiar to him. As Donovan's eyes met his he turned away, however, apparently that fixed scrutiny had been quite purposeless. Curious deep blue eyes, a somewhat broad face, and black hair—why, the fellow had a Cornish look! And then it suddenly flashed into Donovan's mind that the likeness which had struck him was a likeness to Trevethan the blacksmith. Surely this must be Jack Trevethan for whom he had promised to search. He went round to the marker's seat, there was no time for beating

about the bush, he just bent forward and said in a low voice,

"Is your name John Trevethan?"

The billiard-marker started violently, and his dark face flushed. Donovan felt at once that his guess had been correct, even though the man gave an angry denial.

"My name's Smith. What do you want with me?"

"Nothing. But I have a message for a man named Trevethan from his father," said Donovan, carelessly. "I see I was mistaken, but you are like the description given me."

He moved away then, and made his way to Stephen. A fresh game had just been begun, this time Stephen was only looking on; he had lost a good deal, and was not in the best of tempers.

"What, you here, Farrant!" he exclaimed, with surprise, for he had been too much engrossed to notice Donovan before he actually spoke to him.

"You passed me just now on Westminster Bridge, I came in here to try to get hold of you. Haven't you had enough of this? Come with me and hear the 'Cloches de Corneville,' we've not had so much as sixpennyworth of music since you came up."

"I can't come now, I'm with these other fellows," said Stephen, irresolutely.

"Can't!" ejaculated Donovan, scornfully. "You've not sold yourself to them, I suppose. Come along, you've had your game, and we shall just be in time for the half price."

Stephen was always easily led, a little more persuasion and the stronger will triumphed, Donovan gained the day.

As they passed out of the saloon he glanced once more at the billiard-marker; he was so convinced of his identity with Trevethan's son that he could not make up his mind to go without one more effort. Hastily scrawling his name and address on a card he once more crossed over towards the Cornishman, and said, with apparent carelessness,

"If you happen to know anything of this Trevethan, he will be able to get news of his father at this address."

The man did not speak, but he took the card, and as Donovan turned away he neglected his duties to look after him as he passed down the long saloon.

"The light one was young Causton, but who can he be?" mused the billiard-marker. "Farrant! there was no such name at Porthkerran. He's a knowing hand, wanted to get the other

out of this, and hooked him neat enough, but I was up to him, I wasn't going to be fooled out of my name."

With which reflections he put Donovan's card into his waistcoat pocket, and with a sigh returned to his neglected duties. But in spite of his satisfaction at not having been "fooled" into a confession, the thought of his old father at Porthkerran haunted him uncomfortably.

Stephen meantime was listening with great delight to the music at the Opera Comique, Donovan fancied some resemblance to Porthkerran in the little fishing town represented on the stage, and therewith heard and saw little else, but in a sort of dream lived again the months he had spent with the Tremains, returning every now and then to the prosaic realisation that he was in a hot theatre with his rival beside him, this Stephen Causton to whom he must before all things be perfectly just. The orchestra twanged and scraped, the songs and choruses succeeded one another, the audience applauded, and Donovan forced himself away from the thoughts of the little Cornish village, and made himself face the present and think out his plans with regard to Stephen.

The result of this was that as they walked home he told him a little about his former life, and Stephen was for the time impressed, liked

Donovan better than he had ever liked him before, and perhaps for the first time thoroughly respected him. But though he made many resolutions not to be led away by Johnson and Curtis, daylight and some disagreeable chaffing from his former companions about his capture by Donovan Farrant, undid all the good that had been done.

Donovan saw that something was amiss when they met at dinner-time. He had made up his mind to do all possible justice to Stephen, to ignore his failings, and to be perfectly friendly with him, but his patience was severely tried by the resolute sulkiness of his companion's manner.

Hardly a word was spoken during the meal; as soon as might be, Donovan turned his chair round to the fire and took up the *Daily News*; Stephen too got up from the table, and stood with his back against the mantelpiece. Presently he broke the silence.

"I say, Farrant, just understand at once, please, that I won't have you dogging me again to-night."

"I thought you were due at the hospital," said Donovan, carelessly.

"So I am; but you know well enough what I mean. You know that you dogged me last night."



"If by knowing where you were and following you, you mean dogging, I certainly did," said Donovan, throwing aside his paper. "I suppose Curtis and Co. have been chaffing you?"

"That's no concern of yours, and I'm not going to be interfered with, so just understand."

"I've not the least wish to interfere," said Donovan. "I told you last night why I tried to get you away; I believed that you didn't know what that sort of thing leads to. Now you do know, and if you choose to run into danger with your eyes open, the more fool you."

"You're the last fellow in the world who has a right to dictate to me," said Stephen, with offended dignity.

"I don't dictate, I only warn you that you'll come to grief unless you break with that set."

"And what concern is that of yours, pray?"

"More than you fancy," said Donovan, quietly. "You are a friend of the Tremains, and so am I."

"But I'm not going to bow down to Dr. Tremain in everything, and I told you so before; he's a good enough old fellow, but——"

"Take care how you speak of him," said Donovan, his eyes flashing.

"Don't look so furious; what did I say? You seem to consider the Tremains your special

property. I've known them more years than you have months."

"Then I wonder that you care to take up with fellows whom the doctor would disapprove of. And besides, Causton, if what you told me last night is true, if you really care for—for Miss Tremain, I should have thought you wouldn't have been able to go about with such cads."

"Of course I care for Gladys; but what on earth has that to do with the chums I have here?"

"A great deal," said Donovan, vehemently. "Do you think you'll ever be worthy of her if you go on making such a fool of yourself? You know you're hardly fit to look at her now, and what do you think you'll be like if you let such fellows as Johnson and Curtis lead you by the nose? You'll be a weak-minded, despicable fool. I tell you, if you mean to dream of marrying Miss Tremain, you must fit yourself for her."

"You're wonderfully exercised about it; I believe you want to have her for yourself," said Stephen, tauntingly.

The hot blood rushed to Donovan's face, his eyes fairly blazed with anger; in ungovernable fury he snatched up a boot-jack and hurled it at his companion's head.

The next instant, however, the threatened

tragedy became utterly comic ; Stephen, to save his head, warded off the blow with his arm, and the boot-jack hit him with considerable force on the elbow. Numb, and tingling to the very finger-tips, he simply danced with pain. Waif's tail got trodden on, and he howled dismally ; the fire-irons were knocked down, and went clattering into the fender, and Donovan, overcome by the absurdity of the scene, forgot his anger, and fell into a perfect paroxysm of laughter. Stephen laughed too.

"You wretch ! it was my funny-bone. By Jove ! I believe you've broken it."

"A medical riddle for you," said Donovan, as soon as he could speak for laughing. "Why is the funny-bone so named ?"

Stephen gave it up, and, as the clock struck, remembered that it was time he went back to the hospital. He went off laughing at the answer, "Because it borders on the humerus," and apparently the incident of the boot-jack had really dispelled his sulkiness. Donovan picked up the fire-irons, patted Waif, and then, taking an armful of books from the sideboard, settled down to his evening's work. The boot-jack was ever after a theme for laughter, but they neither of them alluded again to the conversation which had led to the quarrel, nor did Stephen ever think there was the smallest truth

in his taunt. He could not imagine anyone so matter-of-fact as Donovan actually falling in love, and the stony silence with which all his remarks about Gladys were met only confirmed him in the opinion that his companion was indeed of the "cast iron" philosopher type.

To Donovan that year was a hard struggle. The continual worry about Stephen, and the friction of his presence, were perhaps good for him; they certainly prevented him from becoming self-engrossed; but there were times when he felt unbearably jaded and harassed, as if he could not much longer keep up the weary fight. He grew curiously fond of Stephen, and Stephen returned the liking in his own odd way, vacillating between Donovan and his old companions, and proving his miserable weakness of will; but, though Donovan saved him from much, he could not prevent the steady downhill course into which he had fallen.

The approach of the long vacation brought another struggle, and another hardly-won victory. There was a very urgent invitation to Porthkerran. Of course it must be refused, but Donovan had to go through the old battle once more before the letter was written. He made it a question of economy this time; his finances were low, and he had made up his mind to stay in town through the summer months, having

obtained temporary employment in working up the book-keeping of some small tradesman. The Tremains were sorry, but could say nothing against such a plan ; and Donovan saw Stephen go westward for his three months' holiday close to Gladys' home, and felt a bitter pang of envy.

He worked almost fiercely through those stifling summer months, and in every spare moment read hungrily on all sides of the great question which was gradually filling his mind more and more. There was temporary satisfaction in the actual reading, but he seemed to gain little from it. Arguments for, repulsed him ; arguments against, pained him. He felt no nearer the knowledge of the truth.

October brought a return to his hospital work, and fresh difficulties with Stephen, who came back from Porthkerran inclined to break out into violent re-action after the subdued atmosphere of his mother's house.

Mrs. Causton herself had not been altogether satisfied with her son during the vacation. She wondered whether Donovan's influence could be bad for him, and after he had left she worried herself so much about him that she at length resolved to go up to town for a week, visit him in his rooms, and satisfy herself that the doctor's *protégé* was not corrupting him.

One morning when Donovan was sitting at breakfast, discussing a tough essay on "Spontaneous Generation," over weak coffee and leathery toast, there came a knock at the door, the landlady announced "Mrs. Causton," and much surprised, he found himself face to face with Stephen's mother.

"I have taken you by surprise, Mr. Farrant," she began, in her rather demure voice. "I came up unexpectedly to town on business, and was anxious to find Stephen before his lectures began. I arrived too late last night to come and see him then, as I had intended doing. Stephen is not unwell, I hope? I see you are breakfasting alone."

"He will be down directly," said Donovan. "Let me give you some coffee, Mrs. Causton; and then I'll go and call Stephen."

"Yes, pray tell him I am here," replied Mrs. Causton. "No coffee, thank you. I breakfasted at my hotel. Pray call Stephen. I hope he is not often so late as this?"

Donovan judiciously ignored that question, and went to summon the hope of the Caustons, whom he found sleeping the sleep of the just, and in the meantime the anxious mother took a rapid survey of the sitting-room. It was redolent of tobacco, but no doubt that was due to Donovan Farrant; for the rest she could see

nothing to find fault with, unless indeed the evil lurked in those books piled up on the side-board. She crossed the room, and put up her double gold-rimmed eye-glasses to read the titles. There were several works on medicine and surgery, and some bulky volumes of science, then came an untidy pile of a strangely heterogeneous character. She read the titles with great dissatisfaction. Maurice, Renan, Haeckel, Kingsley, Strauss, Erskine, and at the top an open volume, Draper's "Conflict between Religion and Science." She turned to the fly-leaf. It was a much worn, second-hand book, but under two half erased names was written "D. Farrant." Of course all these books belonged to him, but how could she tell that Stephen did not read them too?

Her manner when Donovan came down again was decidedly stiff. He felt it at once, and it hurt him a little, for the recollection that she had left Porthkerran only the day before, had raised a great hunger in his heart for news of Gladys.

"I hope they are all well at Trenant?" he asked, hoping that her answer might go a little into details; but he only extracted a general reply that everyone was well, that Porthkerran was very little altered, and that old Admiral

Smith had been suffering very much from rheumatic gout.

Before long Stephen appeared, having evidently performed a very hasty toilette, and Donovan, thinking it well to leave the mother and son alone, whistled to Waif and went out.

"How do you like Mr. Farrant? is he a pleasant companion?" asked Mrs. Causton, as the front door closed.

"Oh! he's a very good sort of fellow," said Stephen, ringing the bell for his breakfast, "he's very clever, and works like a nigger."

"Then I wonder he has time to waste on such a paper as this," said Mrs. Causton, laying her black gloved hand on the *Sporting News*.

The *Sporting News*, as it happened, was Stephen's paper, but he could not allow his mother to know that; with a slight pricking of conscience he merely turned the conversation.

"Oh! of course even the hardest working fellows must have a little relaxation. Farrant reads on every subject under the sun."

"I hope you never open those dreadful books of his which I see over there?" asked Mrs. Causton, apprehensively.

"Oh! dear no," replied Stephen, this time with perfect truth. "They're a great deal too stiff for me."

Mrs. Causton gave a relieved sigh and the



conversation drifted away from Donovan to the examination which Stephen was going in for that term. He had lost much valuable time when his eyes had been bad, but was nevertheless very sanguine.

"I must own," said Mrs. Causton, as she walked back to her hotel with Stephen, "that it will be rather a relief to me when your course is over. I don't altogether like this arrangement of sharing rooms with Mr. Farrant, I hope he never speaks to you about religious matters."

"Never; he's a very taciturn fellow, and as to theology, we should never dream of discussing it, so you may be quite happy, mother."

His manner re-assured Mrs. Causton, and he spared no pains to please her during her week's stay, escorting her to the National Gallery, and the British Museum, and one night even submitting to the very dulllest of meetings at Exeter Hall.

"If that poor Donovan Farrant would have come with us," sighed good Mrs. Causton, at the close of a speech which had roused her to enthusiasm.

"Not much in his line, I'm afraid," said Stephen, heartily applauding the speaker with hands and feet in a way which delighted his mother.

"Dear Stephen was so much impressed by

Mr. ——," she told one of her friends afterwards. And the poor lady went back to Cornwall quite satisfied that her son was doing well, that even Dr. Tremain's suggestion that he should lodge with Donovan Farrant had not proved really dangerous. It was, she still thought, a somewhat rash experiment, but certainly dear Stephen was not the least contaminated.

## CHAPTER V.

## A BRAVE SPRITE.

Wonder it is to see in diverse mindes  
 How diversely love doth his pageants play,  
 And shewes his powre in variable kindes :  
 The baser wit, whose ydle thoughts alway  
 Are wont to cleave unto the lowly clay,  
 It stirreth up to sensuall desire,  
 But in brave sprite it kindles goodly fire,  
 That to all high desert and honour doth aspire.  
 Ne suffereth it uncomely idlenesse  
 In his free thought to build her sluggish nest,  
 Ne suffereth it thought of ungentlenesse  
 Ever to creep into his noble breast ;  
 But to the highest and the worthiest,  
 Lifteth it up that els would lowly fall :  
 It lettes not fall, it lettes it not to rest ;  
 It lettes not scarce this Prince to breath at all,  
 But to his first poursuit him forward still doth call.  
*Faerie Queen.* SPENSER.

“CURTIS sent you word that he was going by the 9.30 to-morrow,” said Donovan, coming into the sitting-room one autumn evening, and finding Stephen for once really hard at work.

"All right," was the laconic answer.

"You're not going to the Z—— Races?" asked Donovan, abruptly.

Stephen looked up with a smile.

"In the words of the old Quaker I must answer, 'Friend, first thee tellest a lie, and then thee askest a question.'"

"But with the examination so near and your preparation so frightfully behindhand," urged Donovan.

"Am I not grinding like fifty niggers now to make up?" said Stephen.

"But it's such nonsense your going," continued Donovan, rather incautiously. "Why, you hardly know a horse from a donkey; you'll only get fleeced, and come home up to your neck in debt."

"I wish you'd let me alone," said Stephen; "I tell you I'm going, and you won't bother me out of it, so do shut up."

"What do you imagine your mother would say to it, if she knew?"

The question was an uncomfortable one, and, moreover, Donovan had the power of forcing Stephen to listen to him; he went on, gravely,

"However much you may kick at the way you are going on is anything else; only a few weeks ago you were going to an Exeter Hall meeting

with Mrs. Causton, and now you are going to the Z—— Meeting with a set of snobs who, as sure as fate, will get you into some scrape.”

Stephen was imperturbably good-humoured that evening; he did not take exception even at this very plain speaking, he only swung himself lazily back in his chair and yawned prodigiously. When Donovan had ended, he sat musing for a minute or two, then said, abruptly,

“I tell you what, Farrant, you won’t persuade me out of going, but I don’t care a rap about being with these fellows if you would go. Come, you can spare a day well enough, and we can have no end of a spree.”

Donovan could ill afford such an unnecessary expense, but he knew that his presence would probably keep Stephen straight, and, after some deliberation, he consented to go.

The day proved to be exceedingly fine, one of those still autumn days when scarcely a breath is stirring, when the limp yellow leaves float down slowly and noiselessly from the rapidly thinning trees, and the sun sends its softened beams through a golden misty haze. It was most delicious to get out of smoky London; except for long walks every Sunday, Donovan had not actually been out of town for more than a year, and the change was thoroughly enjoyable. In spite of sundry recollections of old

times which would intrude themselves upon him, the day really bid fair to be a pleasant one. Stephen was companionable enough, and everything was so fresh to him that Donovan found it easy work to keep him out of difficulties.

All went well till the races were over, then, as they were elbowing their way through the crowd surrounding the grand stand, Donovan suddenly felt a hand on his shoulder and a well-known voice ringing in his ear.

"Well, milord, who would have thought of seeing you here! How are you, my dear fellow?"

He turned round to have his hand grasped by old Rouge Frewin. There he was, as unchanged as if for all this eventful time the world had been standing still with him, the same genial, cheery, red-faced old captain who had watched by his sick-bed at Monaco, and cried like a baby when they had parted at Paris. Donovan would have been both ungrateful and unnatural if his first thought had not been one of real pleasure at meeting again the kindly old man.

"Why, captain, this is an odd chance that has brought us together. How natural it seems to see you again! What corner of the moon have you dropped from?"

"Tacking between London and Paris ever

since you left us," said Rouge, with a sigh. "I've missed you, lad; it's a hard life for an old man like me; I'm growing old, Donovan, growing old fast, and Noir has been hard on me since you went."

"Is Noir here to-day?"

"No, he was to come back from Paris to-night; I don't know the ins and outs of it, but Noir is very uneasy just now, he won't settle down in England comfortably, and it's a miserable life this knocking about among foreigners; it's killing me by inches, and poor old Sweepstakes too."

"What, is Sweepstakes still in the land of the living?"

"Yes, he's at my rooms in town, not the old place in Drury Lane, Noir wouldn't go there again. By-the-by, milord, what are you doing with yourself now?"

The question first reminded Donovan that there were reasons which made it advisable not to give his address to the Frewins. He replied that he was at present a medical student, and then as he spoke he recollected Stephen, and turned hastily round, but Stephen was gone.

The races were over, he might possibly have gone back to the station, but Donovan thought that he had probably caught sight of some of his friends and had gone to speak to them; he was

a good deal vexed. It was simply impossible, however, to find him in such a crowd, he was obliged to give it up, and, quitting the race-course with the old captain, made his way as quickly as might be to the train.

They had not gone far when a block in the long line of carriages attracted their notice.

"Some accident," said Rouge. "Never was yet at any races without seeing a spill of some sort."

Donovan pushed on quickly without speaking a word; he felt almost certain that Stephen had somehow got into mischief.

By the time he had made his way through the throng of people a dog-cart which had been overturned was being raised from the ground, and Donovan at once caught sight of Stephen's friend Curtis standing at the head of the terrified horse, whose violent kicking and plunging had caused the accident. Many people were offering their help, several were stooping over a prostrate figure, he pushed them aside; it was indeed Stephen Causton who lay there perfectly unconscious, the blood flowing slowly from his mouth.

Donovan's authoritative manner soon sent back the mere idlers, while the really efficient helpers came to the fore. Rouge offered his



brandy-flask, and in a very short time an extemporized litter was brought up, and Stephen was borne away to the nearest hotel.

It was all done in such a business-like way, for a time it seemed to Donovan only like his ordinary hospital work; it was not till a doctor had arrived, and his own responsibility was lessened, that he realised that it was Stephen Causton, the Tremains' friend, Stephen for whom he felt himself in a manner accountable, who was lying there in danger of his life. In a disjointed way he gathered from Curtis the facts of the accident. Stephen had caught sight of them, and had gone to speak to them, Curtis had offered him a seat in the dog-cart, and they had driven off, intending to dine together in the town; something had startled the horse, and the dog-cart had been overturned. The rest had escaped with bruises and a severe shaking, but Stephen had broken a rib, the bone had pierced the lung, and he was for some hours in a very precarious state.

The first moment that Donovan could be spared he ran down to despatch a telegram to Dr. Tremain, and not till he had with some difficulty worded the message did one thought of himself come to trouble him.

*"D. Farrant, Royal Hotel, Z——, to Dr. Tremain, Trenant, Porthkerran. Causton has met*

*with a bad accident. Please tell his mother, and come at once if possible."*

What a panic poor Mrs. Causton would be in, and how strange it would seem to them all that he—Donovan—should be with Stephen at Z——. Of course Dr. Tremain would know that the Z—— races were on, and would naturally arrive at the conclusion that he had led Stephen there. It could not be supposed that the orderly mother's son, who attended Exeter Hall meetings, would have gone to such a place without great persuasion. In a moment there rose before Donovan the whole situation. The decision must lie with Stephen; if he chose to confess his long course of self-pleasing all would be well, but, if he chose to be silent, Donovan felt that he could not betray him, that even at the risk of being entirely misunderstood, he must hold his tongue, an easy enough task surely—merely to keep silence—a task in which he was already well practised!

He went back to the sick-room and forgot all his presentiments in keeping anxious watch over Stephen. The hæmorrhage had been checked, but all through the night the most alarming prostration continued, and it was far on in the next-day before the immediate danger was over, and the patient fell into an exhausted sleep.

Donovan left him then for the first time, the landlord's daughter keeping guard over him, and went himself to get much-needed food and rest.

Gladys never forgot that autumn evening when the telegram arrived. For some days the household at Trenant had been disturbed and anxious, for Jackie and Nesta were both laid up with the measles, and Nesta, always a rather delicate little child, was seriously ill. The nurse had gone down for her supper, and Gladys had taken her place in the night nursery. As she sat beside the sleeping children she heard a sharp ring at the door-bell, a message for her father she supposed, and thought no more about it, little dreaming *what* message it was, and from whom. And yet, as she sat there in the dim light, her thoughts did drift away to Donovan. What was he doing in those dull London lodgings which he had described to them? His letters had been fewer and shorter lately, and he never spoke of any future visit to Porthkerran. Were their lives growing farther apart? Was it never to be anything but waiting and trusting? Should she never learn that he had found the truth? She covered her face and prayed silently, hardly in thought-out words, but only, as it were, breathing out her want of patience, her love for him, and her

longing that he might think and do that which was right.

The nurse came back, and Gladys, released from her watch, went down to the drawing-room; she was strong to meet the news that awaited her, and she needed all her strength. Over and over again she read the words scrawled on that thin pink paper, hearing with painful acuteness all her father's surmises as to what could have taken Stephen and Donovan to those races. She hated herself for it, but it hurt her a great deal more to hear a shadow of blame attached to Donovan than to hear that Stephen was lying perhaps in mortal danger. The one caused her a sharp stab of pain, the other only a shocked awed feeling—a vague regret.

Her father went away in a few minutes to break the news as well as he could to poor Mrs. Causton. Mrs. Tremain was called away to little Nesta, and Gladys sat crouched up alone by the fire, feeling supremely wretched. It could not be that Donovan had led Stephen astray—and yet her father had evidently thought it must be so! Her tears flowed fast, but still not one was shed at the thought of Stephen's accident; it was a tall manly figure that rose before her, excluding everything else, a strong face with dark sad eyes and resolute

mouth. It could not be that Donovan had forgotten his high aims, had thrown aside his search after truth, and sunk so low—it could not be! His face rose before her in vivid memory; she felt certain that he had not done this thing. She dashed away her tears, choked them back angrily, resolutely.

“It can’t be, it *isn’t* so; I will never, never believe it!” she cried, passionately. “Though all the world accuse him, I will never believe it! I will trust you, Donovan—always!”

She was calm again now, invincible in her woman’s stronghold of absolute trust. The arrows of logic, the force of argument, the stern array of steely facts spend their force in vain on that stronghold.

Her rhapsody over, there came almost directly the call to work, to return to common life. Her father came back from his sad errand; she went to meet him in the hall to ask after Mrs. Causton.

“Oh! there you are, dear,” he exclaimed. “I came back to fetch you. Aunt Margaret is terribly upset, and I promised that you should go to her.”

Gladys trembled a little, but she could make no objection, and ran up to fetch her things.

“You must try to induce her to go to bed,” said the doctor, as he walked back with Gladys to Mrs. Causton’s house. “We shall start quite

early to-morrow morning, but she will be fit for nothing if she does not sleep first."

Mrs. Causton was exceedingly fond of Gladys, and, in spite of the real want of sympathy between them, this evening she clung to her more than ever, probably, in the depth of her misery, not noticing that there was a little shadow of restraint in her manner. For, though Gladys had the sweetest and most delicate tact and sympathy, she often let herself become absorbed in sympathising with one person. She was one of those characters who love the few ardently, but are a little wanting in breadth, and now every doubt or reproach cast on Donovan pushed her further away from Mrs. Causton.

However, she did her best, listened in silence to Mrs. Causton's sorrows, helped her to make all the necessary arrangements for her journey, soothed her by mute caresses, and at last persuaded her to go to bed. Then she lay down beside her, and tried to sleep, but long after Mrs. Causton had forgotten her troubles in restful unconsciousness, Gladys lay with wide-open eyes, keeping rigidly still for fear of disturbing her companion, and in spirit sharing Donovan's watch beside Stephen's sick-bed.

In the morning Mrs. Causton awoke little refreshed. She was almost disabled by a terrible headache. Gladys had to do everything

for her. As she brought her a cup of coffee, it seemed to dawn on the poor lady that very soon she should have to part with her.

"Oh! Gladys," she said, pleadingly, "could you not come with me? I don't know what I shall do without you."

"I would willingly come," said Gladys, trembling violently, "only—I'm not sure whether mother could spare me——"

She broke off abruptly, as her father drove up in the pony-carriage. The thought of meeting Donovan once more had set all her pulses throbbing painfully, but she could not make up her mind to ask her father whether she might go, she could not even repeat Mrs. Causton's words to him.

The idea had, however, taken a strong hold on Mrs. Causton. She greeted the doctor with an urgent entreaty that he would allow Gladys to go with them.

"I am so poorly, and she has been such a comfort to me. I don't know how I can do without her."

"Very well, Gladys dear," said Dr. Tremain, putting his hand on her shoulder. "If you will come with us, and can do without any more preparation, it shall be so. Nesta is better to-day, and we will send a note back to explain to the mother."

It was all settled in a few minutes. Gladys hurried away to put on her walking things. The maid hastily packed her little night-bag for her, and before long she was driving with her father and Mrs. Causton to St. Kerrans.

The journey seemed endless; though they had started very early, it was four o'clock in the afternoon by the time they reached Z——.

Gladys was very stiff and weary, but she had hardly time to think of herself, she was so taken up with the effort of sympathising with and helping Mrs. Causton, while, as they drove through the busy streets of Z——, the consciousness that every moment was bringing her nearer to Donovan made her heart beat quickly, and the bright colour rise in her cheeks.

At length they reached the Royal Hotel, learnt at once from one of the waiters that Stephen was doing well, and were ushered upstairs. Mrs. Causton leant on the doctor's arm, Gladys followed tremblingly, glad enough to cling to the banisters. They were shown into a private sitting-room. Already the afternoon light was failing, but a fire blazed in the grate, and by its ruddy glow Gladys saw Donovan. He was stretched at full length on the hearth-rug fast asleep. The waiter hesitated.

"Poor young gent! He was up all the night. Perhaps you'll wake him, sir, if you see fit," and



then, with a curious glance at the three visitors, the man withdrew, mentally ejaculating that he "wasn't going to disturb the poor fellow, not if it was to see the queen herself." But as the door closed, Donovan started up.

"Is he awake?" he cried, fancying that Stephen's nurse had come; then, catching sight of Dr. Tremain, he sprang to his feet. "I am so glad you've come. He is really doing well now. The immediate danger is over."

As he spoke he shook hands with the doctor and Mrs. Causton, then, for the first time catching sight of Gladys, he was all at once speechless. For one moment their eyes met, that strange meeting which seems like the blending of soul with soul. That was their real greeting. The conventional handshake was nothing, and in another moment Donovan had turned hastily away, and plunged abruptly into details of Stephen's accident.

Mrs. Causton was painfully agitated, and was indignant when Donovan insisted on the extreme rashness of going at once to see the patient. To wake up and to find his mother unexpectedly there, would be the very worst thing for him, and though Dr. Tremain quite agreed, and in fact took the law into his own hands, Mrs. Causton regarded Donovan entirely in the light of an enemy.

Dr. Tremain went himself to the sick-room, and it was arranged that he should relieve guard, and, when Stephen awoke, tell him of his mother's arrival. Donovan left him there, and steeling himself for the encounter, went slowly back to the sitting-room, where Mrs. Causton was lying in an easy-chair, and Gladys was trying to persuade her to take a cup of tea.

"You will have some tea, too, will you not?" she said, looking up at Donovan. "They told us you had been up all night; you must be very tired."

"Thank you, yes, I should like some," said Donovan, allowing himself to watch the little white hands as they lifted the big plated teapot and poured out the tea. And as she handed him his cup, he noticed, in that strange way in which the minutest trifles are noticed when there seems least time to waste on them, that the china was thick, white, with a pink rim, and bore the stamp of the Royal Hotel.

He was startled when Mrs. Causton first spoke to him; the waiting seemed to embitter her, and she made him feel that his presence was very distasteful.

"Have you any other particulars to tell me of my son's accident?" she asked, very coldly.

"I think you have heard all now," he re-

plied, "all that I myself know, for I did not actually see the carriage upset."

"Having brought Stephen to such a place, I should have thought the least you could have done was to stay with him," said Mrs. Causton, with a quiver of indignation in her voice. "It has been a miserable mistake from the very beginning. I hoped he might have had a good influence over you, but you have abused my trust cruelly. If I had ever dreamt that you would be the stronger of the two, he should never have shared your rooms."

Donovan did not speak; but Gladys, glancing up at him, saw that he was passing through some great struggle. Her heart ached as she heard Mrs. Causton's unjust words. One effort she must make to check the conversation.

"Will you not come to your room and lie down, auntie?" she suggested. "You will be fitter to go to Stephen when he wakes, if you rest first."

"I shall rest quite as well here, thank you," said Mrs. Causton. "We need not trespass further on your time, Mr. Farrant. I am sure you can ill afford to waste two days in the middle of term."

"I should be sorry to annoy you by staying," said Donovan, quietly. "Good-bye."

He held out his hand gravely.

"I only hope you may take warning yourself by my poor Stephen's fate," said Mrs. Causton, relapsing into tears. "It is one of those mysterious dispensations so hard to resign oneself to, the innocent suffering and the guilty escaping. I am sure I hope and pray that you may repent while there is yet time."

He wished Gladys good-bye and left the room.

For one moment Gladys sat quite still ; then a sudden impulse seized her ; she *could* not let him go like this, it was too cruel, too heartless ! She opened the door and ran down the passage, catching sight of him far in front. Would he never stop ! Would nothing make him look round ! By the time she reached the head of the stairs he was half way down them ; it seemed to her as if miles of grey and crimson carpeting stretched between them.

Half timidly, and yet with a ring of despair in her voice, she called to him.

"Donovan !"

For a moment his heart stood still ; he caught at the rail, turned, and saw her standing far above him. He did not speak, but waited—waited till she came to him in complete silence. His lips were firmly pressed together, his face rigid. Was it hard of him—was it cruel to her to meet her thus ?

The very sound of his own name from her lips had re-awakened the wildest longing for all that he knew must never be. He waited for her to speak, but her words only made the tumult within him wilder, the struggle more intolerable.

"Do not go like this," she said, pleadingly; "please wait and see papa. Aunt Margaret doesn't know what she is saying. I know you could explain it all to papa. Please, please wait!"

She had not the faintest idea that she was putting the most terrible temptation before Donovan; but she was almost frightened by the spasm of pain which passed over his face; his voice too was strange and hollow, as he answered, sadly,

"You are mistaken, I can't explain anything."

His words caused such a sudden downfall of all her hopes that the tears rose to her eyes, fight against them as she would it was of no use, and nothing but a sort of despairing womanly pride kept them from overflowing.

Poor Donovan saw all, and turned away. That moment was as the bitterness of death to him. He was giving her pain, making her think badly of him,—for what? Was it indeed for her good? It could not surely be—it was so unnatural—so hard—so merciless! He would

speak to her, tell her of his love, tell her that he would do anything—everything—for her sake !

And yet was that really true, when he could not keep silence ? Oh, weakness ! here he was fighting the old battle which he had fought in the orchard at Trenant, on the Porthkerran cliffs, on Westminster Bridge ! Each time he thought he had conquered, yet now this deadly temptation had risen again, as strong—far stronger—than ever. Should those bitter efforts be wasted ? Should his longing for present relief—for happiness even for her—lead him to speak words which he had no right to speak ? But this silence, this silence as to Stephen, it was anguish. He must right himself to her ! Had not his own character some claim upon him ? Had he not his own rights as well as Stephen's to bear in mind ? That was the great question, it was clearly Self *versus* Stephen, a just claim for himself, certainly, yet a claim for self *only*, Yes, he would be truthful in his self-arguing, even though it brought keenest pain,—to right himself would not be to serve Gladys, would not even make her really happier, he had resolved long ago that she must learn not to care for him. He would be silent now for her sake as well as for Stephen's—the proof of his love should be his silence !

All this passed through his mind in a very

few moments. He turned back to Gladys, she was leaning against the banisters, her head drooped low, the light from a coloured lamp hanging over the stairs threw a golden glow over her sunny hair; her face was partly in shadow, but in the half light her bright colouring looked all the more lovely.

He knew it was the last time he should see her, but he would not let his eyes soften, would not let one trace of his love show itself.

"It is better that I should go at once," he said, taking her hand, "believe me, it is much better. Good-bye."

Gladys looked steadily up at him, her blue eyes were quite clear now, there was a sort of triumphant trust in her look.

"Good-bye," she said, softly, not one other word.

She watched him as he went down the stairs, watched very quietly, but very intently, noticed his firm, almost sharp step, heard him call for his bill, and ask the time of the London train, lastly heard the silence, the aching silence of the quiet hotel when he was really gone.

But in spite of her heartache there was the dawning of a rapturous joy for her even now. For when Donovan had turned to say good-bye to her, there had been that in his face which

had raised her out of herself. He had looked utterly noble, the very light of Christ had shone in his face. She thought it was indeed probable that he did not care for her as he had once cared, but what did that matter? in the intensity of her joy for him she could not think of her own pain. For she loved Donovan with her whole heart and soul, and she felt, nay, she *knew*, that he was "not far from the kingdom of Heaven."



## CHAPTER VI.

## OLD FRIENDS.

Would'st thou the holy hill ascend,  
 And see the Father's face ?  
 To all his children humbly bend,  
 And seek the lowest place.

Thus humbly doing on the earth,  
 What things the earthly scorn,  
 Thou shalt assert the lofty birth  
 Of all the lowly born.

*Violin Songs.* GEORGE MACDONALD.

LONDON was shrouded in the murkiest of November fogs ; Donovan groped his way with some difficulty down York Road, opened the door of his lodgings with a latch key, made his way into the cheerless sitting-room, lighted the gas, and threw himself back in a chair in hopeless dejection. The sharpness of the struggle was over, the bitterness of the pain past, his was now the

“Stified, drowsy, unimpassioned grief  
 Which finds no outlet or relief.”

Perhaps the most real and unforgettable form of suffering.

He sat motionless, the light which had so cheered Gladys had died from his face now, it was clouded, haggard, with dark shadows under the eyes.

He was roused at last by hearing Waif's bark in the distance, then came sounds of opening a door down below, a rush and a patter of feet on the kitchen stairs, and a violent scratching and impatient whining at his own door. He dragged himself up, opened it, and received a frantic welcome from his dog, who had been shut into an empty cellar during his absence.

Waif was almost crazy with delight at seeing him back again ; he dashed round and round him, bounded up in the air, whined and snorted, licked him all over, and finally tore across the room in a violent hurry to perform his usual act of loyal service, to drag out the boot-jack, and, one at a time, to deposit his master's slippers in the fender.

This evening there was no fire ; Waif found that out, and seemed perplexed ; he was not quite capable of striking a match, but he worried Donovan into doing it, and then sat contentedly watching the yellow blaze, thudding the floor with his tail in the intensity of his satisfaction. Donovan watched him thoughtfully.

"We must jog on together, Waif, my boy," he said, patting the sagacious black and tan head.

Waif's eyes twinkled and shone, his tail beat a regular tattoo on the floor.

The dog and his master understood each other, and Donovan would certainly have chosen to spend the rest of the evening with his dumb companion, to indulge his sad thoughts in silence, but it was not to be so. There was a knock at the front door before many minutes had passed; he heard a voice which seemed strangely familiar asking if he were in; another moment, and Rouge and Noir were ushered into his room.

"Tracked you at last," said Noir, his dark face lighting up with a gleam of satisfaction as he wrung Donovan's hand.

"And all owing to those lucky races and my quick eyes," said the old captain. "How's the chap that was pitched out of the dog-cart?"

"Badly hurt, but doing well now," said Donovan. "How did you find me out?"

"Through the light-haired fellow who was holding the horse, a fellow-student of yours. Why, Waif, old dog, you don't look a day older!"

Waif sniffed cautiously at the old captain's clothes, recognised him after a few minutes,

and was pleased to renew the friendship. Noir meanwhile was speaking in a lowered voice to Donovan.

"I came here on business—can I have a few words alone with you? Let us take a turn outside."

"All right," said Donovan. "You'll stay and have some supper; we'll be back before long, captain, there's an evening paper for you, and as many medical books as you like."

Rouge settled himself comfortably in an arm-chair, and Noir and Donovan went out into the foggy street.

"I am in a scrape," said Noir, abruptly. "I have come to ask if you will help me. Perhaps, though, you are so respectable and virtuous now that you have forgotten all about the old times."

"My memory isn't ruled by will," said Donovan, rather hoarsely. "Go on."

"Well, I don't blame you for wishing to forget that year—I wish to goodness I could, for, milord, I am decidedly up a tree. You remember Darky Legge? Well, he has been arrested, discovered at last, after carrying on his old game for years. After you left us, I was thrown a good deal with him—in fact, at Paris we acted together, and the wretch, who has no sense of honour, has betrayed me. Unless I

can leave the country at once, I'm a lost man."

"I can't offer you money," said Donovan, "for I can hardly scrape along myself."

"It isn't that I want," said Noir, quickly; "it is this: I can't afford to take the old captain with me to America—I haven't the cash for one thing, and besides, he would be like a mill-stone round my neck. He can live on quietly here for very little, and I will send him what I can from time to time. But you know what he is with no one to look after him; he'd kill himself in a year. I want to know whether you'd mind keeping an eye on the poor old fellow."

Donovan had at first felt the most intense shrinking from any renewal of their old friendship; the remembrance of those dark days was a sort of nightmare to him. He listened to Noir's story silently and painfully, wondering how he could ever have shared in such doings. What a wretched misanthrope he had been, half maddened by sorrow and injustice, hating everything in the world except his dog!

But he was touched by Noir's thought for his old father, the poor, weak, old man whom he still, in his rough way, loved and shielded. They walked a few paces in silence, then Donovan spoke.

"He had better put up at my place; Causton

will never come back to those rooms, and though I'm out most of the day, I shall be able to see something of him, and will do my best to keep him straight."

"You are a trump!" exclaimed Noir, heartily. "But won't he be in your way? I know you're a cut above us."

"You forget I am a Republican," said Donovan, quietly. "Let him come to-morrow, and do you make the best of your way to America."

Noir was immensely struck by the change in his some-time follower; he had always respected Donovan since their quarrel and final separation at Paris, but he felt now at an immense distance from him. After all, he mused, honesty did indeed seem the best policy. No words which Donovan could have used would have impressed him half as much as this visible change and growth, and more than all his readiness to help the old captain roused a feeling of gratitude which lasted as one of the few softening influences through the rest of Noir's life.

And so it was ordered that Donovan should not live alone, should not be free to indulge his misery in silence, but should again have his affections drawn out towards a very weak member of the human brotherhood, should bear again the burden of another's sin, and struggle perseveringly for his deliverance.

## CHAPTER VII.

## VIA CRUCIS.

As for me, I honour, in these loud babbling days, all the Silent rather. A grand Silence that of Romans;—nay, the grandest of all, is it not that of the gods!

Commend me to the silent English, to the silent Romans.

CARLYLE.

DR. TREMAIN was very much vexed when he found that Donovan had left without seeing him, nor could he gather any very distinct account of what had passed either from Mrs. Causton or Gladys. Mrs. Causton irritated him considerably by her tearful and highly-coloured descriptions of the evil which she imagined to have emanated entirely from her son's companion; Gladys was strangely silent and would volunteer nothing, but, in answer to a direct question, told her father that Donovan had refused to see him and would not allow her to disturb him. All this tended only too effect-

ually to confirm the doctor's fears. Donovan had fallen back grievously, there could be little doubt of that; if it had not been so, could he have rushed off at a moment's notice in this way, studiously avoiding him after a separation of more than a year?

Stephen was too ill to be thoroughly questioned on the subject, but the doctor could not refrain from one or two attempts to gain from him the favourable testimony to Donovan's character, for which he hoped against hope.

Once in the night, when he woke refreshed after a long sleep and lay in listless quiet, Dr. Tremain hazarded a question.

"I don't wish you to talk much, Stephen, you are not fit for it; but just give me a simple yes and no to one or two questions. Has Donovan Farrant been influencing you in a way which your mother and I did not expect?"

"Yes," replied Stephen, glad that the question was put in so ambiguous a way that he could reply in the affirmative. But the next question was more direct.

"I am to understand, then, that my finding you in his company at the Z—— races is only one instance in many, that he has often been with you to places which Mrs. Causton—which I myself would have disapproved?"

Stephen's colour deepened; this question



might still be answered by that deceptive "yes," but not without very uneasy stirrings of conscience. And yet how much that was disagreeable might be averted by that affirmative! He had been led astray, what could be more probable and pardonable? He should of course repent, turn over a new leaf, get into the doctor's good graces again, and in no way damage his prospects as Gladys' lover. But if on the contrary the ugly truth came out? Then there would be endless reproaches from his mother, unbearable humiliation; what harm could there be in giving a slight turn to the meaning of a word? In a minute, by that strange process of self-deception often noticed in very weak characters, he had almost persuaded himself that Donovan *had* led him into evil.

He turned a flushed face towards the doctor, and unable to speak the downright lie in one word, softened it down in a sentence.

"I got into the way of playing, and lost a lot at billiards. Farrant went with me. I hoped to have made it up here, but——"

"That will do," said the doctor. "You have spoken more than you ought."

There was such pain and disappointment in his tone that Stephen's conscience tormented him to speak the truth boldly even then, but it

requires a certain amount of moral courage not to stick to a lie when it has been told, and moral courage was a virtue entirely wanting in Stephen. He lay silent in palpitating misery, wishing that he had never seen Donovan, or had never heard of the Z—— races, wishing that many things had been otherwise, but strangely forgetting to wish for the much needed increase of his own courage and honour.

In spite of this mental disturbance, however, he slept again, and the next day was so much better that Dr. Tremain felt justified in leaving him for a few hours. He could not rest now till he had seen Donovan, and entirely satisfied himself that there was no shade of doubt as to the truth of his fears.

It was no use to question Stephen or Mrs. Causton any further, but he made one more attempt on Gladys, who apparently had been the last to speak to Donovan.

"Now tell me, dear, plainly what passed between you," said the doctor, far too deeply engrossed in other matters to notice the painfully bright colour which rose in Gladys' cheeks.

"I will tell you, papa, exactly," she said, quieting herself with an effort. "Aunt Margaret said that she was sure he couldn't afford to waste two days in term time, and then Donovan, seeing that she wished him to go,

said good-bye at once. I went to the head of the stairs to speak to him, for it seemed wrong to let him go like that, but he would not let me call you away from Stephen. And then——” her voice faltered.

“Well?” said her father, with some lurking hope that a fresh light might be thrown on the matter.

“I begged him to stay and explain all to you, for I thought he could. He didn’t answer at first, and looked very, very miserable, but after a minute he told me that he couldn’t explain anything, and that it was better that he should go at once.”

“Was that all?” said the doctor, grievously disappointed.

“That was all,” said Gladys, firmly. “But, papa,” she added, with a sort of proud enthusiasm in her voice, “if you had seen his face when he spoke, you could not have believed for a moment that he has done this.”

For the first time it dawned on Dr. Tremain that his child might possibly have thought more of Donovan Farrant than was wise. Mrs. Caus-ton’s old advice flashed back into his mind; he had talked of open-armed charity, and prudence with tied hands, and was this the ending of it all? He sighed very heavily.

“Dear little Gladys,” he said, drawing her

towards him, "we must not trust too much to faces."

He could not say more, but he looked very sorrowfully into Gladys' wistful eyes.

"You will go to see him, papa," she said, quietly, "and I think you will believe in him then."

Her words almost inspired the doctor with a new hope; warm-hearted and impetuous, he set off at once for London, and early in the afternoon reached the York Road lodgings. It was Saturday, and knowing there would be no lectures, he hoped to find Donovan.

The servant thought he was at home, but was not quite sure. She asked him to come in. Dr. Tremain following her into the sitting-room, found himself in the presence of an apple-faced old man, whose scanty reddish-grey hair was covered by a scarlet smoking-cap, and who seemed to be dividing his attention between a long clay pipe and a tumbler of brandy and water.

"I must have made a mistake, sir," said the doctor, apologising to the odd figure before him. "These cannot be Mr. Farrant's rooms, I think?"

"Donovan Farrant? Oh! yes, these are his rooms. Stunning good fellow he is too. You know him?"

The doctor was puzzled and annoyed.

"Yes, sir, I do know him. Is he in?"

"Gone not ten minutes ago," said the captain, surveying the doctor from head to foot with his little, good-humoured, watery eyes.

Dr. Tremain gave an exclamation of annoyance.

"Gone! how provoking. I specially wanted to see him. Where is he gone—do you know?"

Rouge was all at once seized with the conviction that this stranger was trying to track Noir and prevent his departure; so mentally congratulating himself on his acuteness, he resolved on a course of diplomatic hindrance.

"Mr. Farrant will no doubt be home in half an hour or so," he said, in his blandest tone. "Allow me to offer you a chair."

"You seem to be established here," said the doctor, with a slight frown. "Do you share Mr. Farrant's rooms?"

"I have that honour," said the old captain. "We are old friends—very old friends, I may say—and now in trouble and destitution, he, like the good fellow he is, holds out——"

The captain suddenly remembered his line of diplomacy, and covered his confusion by a cough and a return to the brandy and water.

The silence was broken by a shrill voice from the window.

"While-there's-life-there's-hope. While-there's-life-there's-hope. While-there's-life-there's-hope!" screamed Sweepstakes, in his harsh nasal voice, with maddening monotony.

The doctor, chafed and annoyed as he was, could not help laughing, Sweepstakes mimicking him in a senseless titter, and old Rouge himself joining heartily.

"Clever bird, isn't he. Brought him from West Africa years ago. Would stake my life he's the best talker in England." Then, looking keenly at the doctor, he said, hesitatingly, "You are not a detective, are you?"

The doctor laughed, and told him his name and profession.

"Oh! that's a comfort," said Rouge, heaving a sigh of relief. "Now we can talk freely. To tell you the truth, I thought you were tracking my son, who is just off to America. Boat sails this very day, in fact Donovan's now gone to see him off. I doubt if he'll be home till evening."

"Why, you told me half an hour just now," said the doctor, impatiently.

"When I took you for a detective," said Rouge, with a sly smile.

The doctor was so much vexed that he fairly lost his temper.

"I don't know who you may be!" he ex-

claimed, "but I must say I am surprised to find Donovan Farrant living with people who are in terror of a detective's visit. Have the goodness to tell me at what time you *do* expect him to return."

Poor Rouge was so much flustered by the doctor's hasty speech that he was quite incapable of giving a plain and satisfactory answer.

"I wouldn't for the world bring discredit on the lad," he faltered, the ever-ready tears slowly trickling down his wrinkled cheeks. "I'm as fond of the lad as if he were my own son, and it's a son he'll be to me now that my own has left his native land." Here he began to sob like a child, but still struggled to make himself heard. "I'm not such a fool as I look—time was when I was captain of the *Metora*—I was driven to it"—he pointed to the brandy bottle—"I was driven to it—and it's made me what I am!"

"Will you tell me when Mr. Farrant will be home?" said the exasperated doctor.

"Towards evening," faltered the old captain, "but I couldn't say for certain. Perhaps you'll leave a message?"

"I will come in again later on," said the doctor, and he hastily took up his hat and left the room, quite out of patience with the tearful old captain.

It was a miserable afternoon, cold and foggy ; a fine drizzling rain fell continuously. The doctor felt very wretched, he had hoped to gain some fresh light by a conversation with Donovan, but his interview with Rouge Frewin had only perplexed and disheartened him. How was it that Donovan had taken up again with his old companions ? How could he endure to have such a maudlin old wretch as a fellow lodger ? Things certainly looked darker and darker !

Evening came, Dr. Tremain went back to York Road, still Donovan had not returned, and by this time the old captain had solaced his grief so frequently and effectively that he was by no means sober. A wretched hour of waiting followed. The doctor looked at his watch at least twenty times, the minutes were passing rapidly by, and at the end of the hour he knew he must leave the house to catch the last train to Z——.

Five minutes to eight ! the doctor held his watch in his hand now. Three minutes ! No sound but the heavy breathing of the old captain who had fallen asleep. Two minutes ! how fast the hands moved ! the doctor's heart sank down like lead. One minute ! with a heavy sigh he put back his watch, absently brushed his hat with his coat sleeve, and got up. At



that very moment a key was turned in the latch, the front door was opened and sharply closed, a quick firm step which must be Donovan's was heard in the passage, the door was opened. Yes, there he was ; the doctor stepped hastily forward.

"I had just given you up, I've been in town since two o'clock, hoping to see you!" he exclaimed, anxiously scanning every line of Donovan's face.

His last hope died as he did so, for an unmistakeable expression of surprise, annoyance, and perplexity passed over it ; his colour rose ; he glanced from the doctor to the old captain before speaking, then with no word of regret at having missed so much of his friend's visit he hastily inquired after Stephen.

"Stephen is better, going on perfectly well," replied the doctor, shortly. "I must be off at once, though, or I shall not be able to get to Z—— to-night. Perhaps you'll walk with me to the station."

Dr. Tremain was human and he had had a great deal to try him that day, his tone was almost bitter, Donovan winced under it. One comfort was that the ordeal must be short ; a five minutes' walk—surely he could hold his tongue for five minutes, keep self down, strangle

the words of self justification which must expose so much of another's guilt! And yet never before had he felt so little confidence in himself, the struggle of the previous day seemed to have exhausted his strength, as he stepped out into the dark rainy November night he felt an almost unconquerable shrinking from the inevitable pain which was before him. If he could but win through with it! If he could but do the difficult Right! and there floated through his mind the definition of Right which both he and the doctor held—that which brings the greatest happiness to the greatest number of people for the greatest length of time. He honestly thought that his silence would be right, and clung desperately to the one strengthening thought of the gain to others which this five minutes might bring. The doctor's voice broke in upon his mental struggle. He set his face like a flint and listened.

"I wanted some explanation of all this, Donovan, and I had hoped for plenty of time with you, we are limited now to a very few minutes. I must say that all I have seen of your way of life both to-day and yesterday has surprised and grieved me. I come to your rooms and find a disreputable old man, in dread of a detective's visit, and not too sober;

he tells me he is an old friend of yours, I thought you made up your mind to break with such friends as those?"

"There were special reasons why Captain Frewin should be an exception to that rule," said Donovan, in a voice so well reined in from yielding to any sign of feeling that it sounded cold and indifferent.

"There are always special reasons, I suppose, for backsliding!" said the doctor, hastily.

There was a silence, then Dr. Tremain went on more quietly.

"That is, of course, your own concern; but, as to your relations with Stephen, I have some right to ask. His father is my oldest friend; he will hold me responsible for having allowed you to share his rooms. Stephen has himself told me that he fell into habits of gambling. I am not surprised; he is grievously weak. But he tells me that you were with him, and that explains everything far too easily. You are strong-willed enough to lead him as you please. Only I could not have believed it of you; I never would have believed it if I hadn't met you with him at Z——."

Donovan breathed hard, but did not speak.

"Have you nothing to say?" said the doctor, in the tone of one clinging to a forlorn hope. "Can you not tell me that I am at least in part

mistaken? Can you not explain anything to me?"

He looked steadily at him as he spoke, thinking perhaps of Gladys' words, "You will believe in him when you see him." But Donovan's face was dark and cold and hard-looking now. The doctor had never seen such a look on his face before; he misinterpreted it entirely. But his very grief made him speak gently and pleadingly.

"God forgive me, Donovan, if I have been harsh with you; but just let me know from your own lips that you cannot explain things—cannot free yourself from blame. Gladys told me what you said to her, but I couldn't rest till I had heard the truth from you yourself."

"I have nothing more to say," said Donovan, clenching his hands so fiercely that even then the feeling of bodily pain came as a relief to him. "I can explain nothing; it would have been better if you had not come to see me."

"Ay, better indeed!" said the doctor, with some bitterness, "for then I should at least have had some hope that I was mistaken. The only thing is that Stephen is in part excused if, as he says, you did go with him, did lead him wrong. One more question let me ask you; I don't wish to play the inquisitor, but just tell me whether this was the reason you would not come to us in the summer?"

For the first time the burning colour rose in Donovan's face. How could he answer that question? They had just entered the crowded station; there under the flaring gas-lamps, amid the noisy traffic, his reply must be made—somehow. What if he told the doctor his real reason, told him that he loved Gladys? He hated mysteries; it would be infinitely easier to be perfectly open. Besides, the confession would explain so much, would at once bring him into his old place with Dr. Tremain. And yet, taking all things into account, it would be better for everyone but himself if he just held his tongue. Better for Stephen, better that he should lose his place in the Tremain household, and be entirely forgotten, better—infinately better—for Gladys. If his name ceased to be mentioned, if they all believed him to be what he now appeared, in time she too would come to share that belief. He honestly believed that to forget him would be her truest happiness, and the remembrance of their last interview, when she had been unable to hide her pain, strengthened him now. Anything to save her from a lifelong sorrow! "Think evil of me, dear love," was now his inward cry, "suffer, if it must be, that short pain, but only learn to forget!"

And yet! Even now came a passionate sigh

of longing, human weakness alternating with the lofty self-renunciation. If only there had been no obstacle! *Why* was he hemmed in by thick darkness? *why* were his doubts insurmountable? And then he shuddered to think that he was beginning to long for knowledge of the truth, chiefly that he might be in a position to win Gladys.

These thoughts had rushed tumultuously through his mind, and meantime the doctor waited for his answer, and they had walked up the platform. "Was this the reason you would not come to us?" He could not tell an untruth; the crimson flush which had risen to his brow, the long pause, both told unfavourably against him with Dr. Tremain. So did the iron voice in which at length his unsatisfying answer was made.

"I invented an excuse last summer—my real reason for not coming I entirely decline to tell you."

"I am disappointed in you, Donovan," said the doctor, and his voice even more than the words carried a terrible pang with it, and sent a momentary spasm of pain over Donovan's strong face.

"Just forget me, that is all I ask of you," he said, unable to free his tone from all expression as he would have wished.

The doctor had taken his place ; something in that last speech of Donovan's touched him ; he would have spoken in reply, but one of those trivial interruptions which break in so rudely upon the most anxious moments of life prevented him.

The shrill voice of a boy intervened.

"*Punch, Judy, or Fun, Evening Standard, and Echo.* Paper, sir ?"

Some passenger wanted an *Evening Standard* ; at that minute the train began to move. By the time the newspaper boy had sprung down from the step, Dr. Tremain was too far from Donovan to do more than wave a farewell. Once more Gladys' words flashed back into his mind, "You will believe in him when you see him," and this time, in spite of all that had passed, the doctor did waver. For in that tall dark figure on the platform there seemed to him a certain majesty—a majesty inseparable from right or absolute conviction of being in the right. He could not clearly see the face now, but the last look he had seen on it had been a strange blending of pain and strength, the strength predominating over the pain. Could he after all have been mistaken ? Like the warm-hearted, impetuous man that he was, the doctor at once tore a leaf from his pocket-book, and, with tears in his eyes, wrote Donovan

such a letter as the best of fathers might write to his son.

The ordeal was over, the victory had been complete, self had been absolutely kept under; but the victor was too entirely crushed to feel even a shadow of triumph. He stood perfectly still, watching the train as it steamed out of the station, with an odd sensation—more numbing than keenly painful—that it was dragging with it a great part of himself. Presently he must rouse himself to go on with life, to make the most of what was left. There are great rents and voids in most lives, at first we feel stunned and helpless, but after a time we become accustomed to the new order of things, and live on, “learning perforce,” as some one has well expressed it, “to take up with what is left.”

That the loss had come about by his own will did not at all soften matters to Donovan, but rather the reverse. He was past reasoning, almost past thought. When the red lamps on the last carriage had quite disappeared, he turned slowly away, aware that he had deliberately, with his own hand, turned the brightest page of his life's history. A new page must be begun; of that too he was dimly aware.

He left the station and walked slowly through the wet, muddy, cheerless streets. It



did not actually rain, and the wind had risen, there was some comfort in that. With his usual craving for air and space he bent his steps to the river, walked along the Embankment, turned on to Blackfriars Bridge, and chose as his halting-place one of its recesses.

Not since the first days after Dot's death had such a crushing, deadening sense of loss oppressed him, and now, as then, he had to bear his pain alone. But he was stronger than in the old days, stronger because he was growingly conscious of his own weakness, and because his heart was infinitely wider in its sympathies. He was not in the mood to see anything, though the dark, flowing river, and the reflected lights, and the great looming outline of the dome of St. Paul's would at any other time have pleased his eye; to-night he just leant on the parapet, getting a sort of relief from the fresh night wind, but almost unconscious of time and place.

He was roused at last by becoming aware that there was another occupant of the recess. A small elf, whether boy or girl he could not at first tell, was yawning and stretching itself, having just awakened from sound sleep. Presently a dismayed exclamation made Donovan draw a little nearer.

“By all the blissed saints! if they ain’t wet through, all the three of ’em.”

Then came sounds of violent scraping, Donovan, stooping down a little, saw that his neighbour, a small ragged boy, was trying whether a light could possibly be kindled from a box of fusees which had been soaked through and through.

“Ye were a fool, Pat, me boy, to go to sleep in the rain!” exclaimed the elf, with a few superfluous oaths. Finding his efforts to strike a light ineffectual, he scrambled to his feet, and with great deliberation and muttered ejaculations about the “blissed saints,” threw the three boxes of fusees one after another into the river.

“Why do you throw them away?” said Donovan, with some curiosity.

“They was wet through, yer honour,” said the small Irish boy, looking up at Donovan with a friendly grin. “I chucked ’em into the river for fear the devil should get into ’em.”

“How?” asked Donovan, with an involuntary smile.

“Och! yer honour has had no dealings with the devil thin, or he’d niver ask such a thing. Why, says I to meself, ‘Pat, me lad, lave ’em to dry and ye’ll sell ’em right enough;’ but

thin says I to meself again, 'But, Pat, maybe the devil 'ud be in the coppers ye'd get for 'em.' Yer honour don't know how terrible aisy it comes to chate a bit when there ain't nothing else to do."

"Yes, I do know," said Donovan, gravely.

"Do ye raily now?" said Pat, with a broad grin. "And did the devil get inside yer honour? Och, he's a terrible cratur to have dealings with! Last year, yer honour, I was half starved, and one day I priggged a loaf hot and frish from a baker's and ate it up like a shot for fear o' being cotched by the peeler, and if ye'll belave it, yer honour, the devil was in the loaf; och! I could have danced with the pain of it, and after that says I to meself, 'Pat, me lad, kape clear o' the devil, or maybe he'll gripe ye warse next time.'"

"Do you see that fire at the other end of the bridge, Pat?" said Donovan, looking down gravely at the little, grubby-faced Irish boy.

"The petatie stall, yer honour?" said Pat, wistfully.

"Yes," said Donovan, with a half smile. "Do you think the devil would be in the potatoes?"

Pat nodded emphatically.

"Bedad and I do, yer honour, if I was to stale 'em."

"But if I were to give them you?"

"Why, thin, yer honour," cried Pat, grinning from ear to ear, "it wud be the blissed saints as wud reward ye!"

"Come along, then," said Donovan, and the strangely contrasted companions walked off together, the bare-footed, superstitious, but honest little *gamin* and the grave, perplexed, but honest agnostic.

"If yer honour wud but eat one!" exclaimed Pat, looking up with shining eyes from the double enjoyment of the hot potatoes and the charcoal fire.

So Donovan ate a potato—and began his new life.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## TEMPTATION.

Thy face across his fancy comes  
And gives the battle to his hands.

TENNYSON.

THE encounter with Pat served to turn Donovan's thoughts for a short time from his trouble, it made him realise that there were other beings in the world besides Tremains, men, women, and children more or less poor, more or less suffering, more or less in need of help.

By-and-by, however, being but human, his own sorrow overpowered him again, shutting out for the time all thought of others. He was no novice in sorrow; one by one everything that was of most worth to him had been either taken away or voluntarily renounced, but this last call, this greatest sacrifice, seemed to have exhausted his strength utterly. He went about his work more like a machine than like a man, he lost all interest in what, but a short time

before, had completely absorbed him. Had he been ordered never to go to the hospital again, he would have acquiesced without a word; had he been warned of the most imminent danger, his heart would not have beat more quickly. To rouse his energy, to awaken his love, hate, interest of any sort seemed impossible.

Dr. Tremain's letter did indeed sharpen his pain; and in a few days' time Mrs. Tremain wrote too—a long letter, cruelly kind, cruelly trustful, urging in almost irresistible words that Donovan would write to her and tell her all he could, that he would be open with her, would remember what old friends they were, and would not allow any formality, or even any mistake, to raise a barrier between them.

"Be sure to write to me when you can," the letter ended, "for till I hear I shall not be happy about you, and you know your place in my heart is very near Dick's. You see I put my request on selfish grounds entirely! My husband seems to have seen so little of you the other day, and I can't help fancying that you misunderstood each other.

"Even if it was not so, please let me hear from you; remember that you adopted Porthkerran as your home, and that even if things have gone wrong we should like to have a little home confidence."

Perhaps Donovan had never before realised how much Mrs. Tremain was to him ; in actually leaving Trenant the year before, he had been too much absorbed with the pain of leaving Gladys to have a thought for anyone else, but now, as he read the motherly letter and recalled all Mrs. Tremain's goodness to him, he did realise the truth very bitterly. How wonderful her sympathy had been at the time of his illness, how comforting it had been to tell her about Dot! "Remember that this is your home," how cruelly tempting were the words! If he could but have written in answer to that letter, if he could but have given that "home confidence" for which she asked!

Well! it was no use going over the old arguments again. He had to be silent,—merely to hold his tongue, merely to let all letters remain unanswered, an easy enough *rôle* surely—merely silence. Nothing to be learnt before that part can be played, no need for beauty of voice or grace of speech, for the silent player nothing is required but self-restraint.

The end of it was that Mrs. Tremain's letter was quietly dropped into the hottest part of the fire; when the sudden blaze died out, Donovan turned away, and with something added to the dead weight of depression which he had borne before, set out for his day's work.

For some weeks things went on in this way, the only change was that those black depths of dejection lost their horrible novelty; it seemed as if for long ages he had fagged through weary uninteresting days, had borne this load at his heart. In time, however, he came to realise the truth that dejection is selfishness, and no more excusable on the ground of naturalness than selfishness is. It was natural certainly to be dejected after a great loss, it was also natural to put self first, but it was not for that reason right. He had been simply wrapped up in himself for weeks, in himself and in those bitter-sweet recollections of the past. When he was fully awake to the fact his strength came back again, dejection was not an easy foe to combat, but he went at it tooth and nail, and the strange incentive to the work was none other than the old captain.

Poor Rouge was a curious person perhaps to save a fellow-being from spiritual death, but nevertheless his presence did save Donovan. It was the sight of that feeble old man dragging through his useless, aimless days, with his pipe and his brandy and water, his weak fits of laughter and his maudlin tears, which first roused him.

How he had neglected the poor old fellow! what a gloomy taciturn companion he had



been! what single thing had he done for Rouge beyond offering him the use of his sitting-room? He must alter his conduct, or the old man might as well not have come to him at all, and would really have some excuse for slowly drinking himself to death. It was on a Saturday that Donovan first became alive to these facts. It was raining heavily, a walk was out of the question, the old captain was asleep on the sofa, Waif slept on the hearthrug, the fire smouldered in the grate, the only waking creature in the room besides himself was Sweepstakes. By way of a first step out of his self-absorption, Donovan walked across to the window, and tried to get up a quarrel with the parrot; it was desperately hard work.

There is an old legend which tells how two monks, finding the tedious routine of their life intolerably dull, resolved that they would try to quarrel by way of enlivenment. They agreed that one should make an assertion and the other should contradict it, this would make an opening for impassioned argument.

"Black is white," asserted the younger monk.

"It is not," replied the elder.

"Black is white," repeated the first speaker.

"Oh, very well, brother," rejoined the other, meekly, "if you say so."

The habit of meek deference had grown so strong, that they found it impossible to quarrel.

Neither Donovan nor Sweepstakes was meek, but nevertheless their quarrel was but a tame one. It required such an exertion to get up the requisite energy. However, after a time the bird did call forth the good-natured teasing which he liked best, and was stimulated into flapping his wings, screaming, chattering, swearing; finally he made it up again, and accepted a Brazil nut as a peace-offering.

When he subsided into quiet, Donovan turned his attention to the outside world, which for days he had seen without seeing. York Road looked very dreary it must be owned. Exactly opposite his window was the establishment of Swimming and Vapour Baths, then came grim, uninteresting houses; far down to the left was the entrance to a timber-yard, where he could see the tops of wooden planks swaying to and fro in the wind. And all the time the rain came down steadily, ceaselessly, with a dull, monotonous drip on the flags, the wheels on the road passed by with a dull, hollow roll, the foot-passengers on the pavement with dull, thudding footsteps, the wind in its gloomy strait of houses with dull, faint moanings. A grey world, but one which must be gone through with, and made the best of.

He felt that his absorption in his trouble had weakened him not a little. All this time his brain had seemed half dead, he had read to no purpose, had lived to no purpose. Worst of all the sense of his complete and final separation from Gladys had come to him for the first time in full force, proving only too clearly that, though he had willed more than a year before not to see her again, he had all the time nursed a faint hope of a possible re-union. He had really renounced her before, but the most honestly-intentioned being in the world cannot altogether shut out every ray of hope; he had hoped without knowing that he hoped, he only knew that it had been so by feeling aware that he had sunk now into a blacker depth. Clearly the only thing for the present was to will not to think of her, the hardest thing in the world. But the idea of putting every thought of her away from him was more tolerable than the idea of letting her memory chain him down in a selfishness which she would abhor.

Now for more days than he cared to remember Donovan had allowed himself the pleasing pain of continually looking at the photograph which the doctor had taken in the orchard, on that summer afternoon which had ended so painfully. To study that family group, to note Gladys' sweet face turned up to his, to see

little Nesta on his own shoulder, to recall that beautiful summer dream, was gratifying but very weakening torture. Looking out on the grey world this afternoon, the world which contrasted so strangely with the bright picture of the past, he made up his mind that he must waste no more—well, yes—*sentiment*, he was honest enough to use the true word, over the photograph. Without any more delay he fetched it from his room and burnt it. Also a certain sixpence which he had worn with Dot's miniature since Gladys had put it into his hand one summer day at the door of Trevethan's forge, was deliberately removed, and found its way into his pocket with the ordinary unhallowed coins. Then, having done his best to clear out his heart, he set to work to fill up the vacuum with that strange substitute—the old captain.

Rouge at once perceived that, as he expressed it, the wind had changed, when he awoke that Saturday afternoon; his companion for the first time seemed approachable, he no longer felt uncomfortable in his presence, he felt as if he could venture to talk freely. After dinner they had a pipe together, and then Rouge launched out into one of his long "yarns," about which there was generally a sort of dry humour. To-night the old man, who was shrewd and

curious, made his story turn on his first love, and Donovan listened with an imperturbable countenance, till the idea of old Rouge Frewin in love with a beautiful Venetian lady of high rank tickled his fancy and made him laugh. The name of the fair one, too, Ceccarella Bonaventura, when reduced by Rouge's pronunciation to "Kickerella Bunnyventury," was sufficiently ludicrous, and when it came to the description of the gorgeous palace on the grand canal, with eight masts at the door, when Rouge graphically sketched the beauties of Venice from the Bridge of Sighs to "the beautiful cafés in the Piazza," when he related how he had "got into hot water" over his serenade, that is had had a pailful poured on his head from a window by way of recompense, it was impossible to resist the keen sense of the ridiculous which was almost his only Irish characteristic.

"And did you really love this signorina?" asked Donovan.

"Love her!" exclaimed Rouge. "I adored her, kissed the ground she trod on—there's not much ground though in Venice—ruined myself in gondolas that I might pass fifty times a day under her windows, wrote verses about her, raved about her, dreamed of her—and then—"

He paused, a merry twinkle lurking in his little grey eyes.

"Well?" asked Donovan.

"The good ship sailed down the Adriatic, and knowing of course that it must be so, I became resigned, and—forgot her again."

The utterly prosaic tone in which he said the last words had a very comical effect. Donovan smiled.

"We all do," said Rouge, in the tone of one adding the moral to the story. "It's the way with first loves, you know."

"Indeed!" ejaculated Donovan, mentally. But guessing that the observant old captain had discovered the real cause of his depression, and had produced his moral tale on purpose, he gave an apparently careless turn to the conversation, for he would not for the world have had him come a degree nearer his secret trouble, that aching loss, of which it would have seemed sacrilege to speak to one like Rouge.

Not many days after this, however, the dull, tedious monotony of life was suddenly broken. Donovan had felt as if he could never again really care for anything in the world, but now a sudden and violent re-action set in.

"Do you ever go to Israel's now?" questioned Rouge one evening.

"Not since I went last with you," returned Donovan.

But therewith arose a fearful craving for his old pastime. He had, during these years of self-denial, been occasionally seized with a great desire for play, and when Stephen had shared his rooms he had often had to bear the great irritation of seeing cards in the hands of other people. But never before had the desire been so irresistible, the temptation so terribly strong. He had resolved not to play; had willed that he would utterly renounce gaming, but he found himself now rebelling against the restraint, albeit it was a self-restraint. He had a horror of pledges as pledges. The consciousness of this self-made curb began to gall him unbearably. He questioned its wisdom. It might have been necessary once, but now might he not safely indulge in his favourite amusement—of course in moderation? Having schooled himself all this time, might he not relax a little, and satisfy this miserable craving? It was hard that by his own doing he should cut himself off from the one amusement that seemed left to him in the dull, grey world.

His strong nature would not quickly yield, however, to such arguments. The struggle went on with fearful intensity for days. Perhaps he would have stifled it sooner had he not

been worn out with the trouble of the last few weeks; however it might be, the temptation proved the most severe of his whole life. It was as if the lower self were making one final and desperate effort to gain the mastery.

One day, in the thick of this inward struggle, he happened to be at work in the dissecting-room, and though, as a rule, he took very little note of the talk that went on there, it chanced that day that, being anxious to escape from his own thoughts, he made himself listen. There were plenty of Freethinkers among the students, and many were at the dogmatic stage of atheism which Donovan had just passed out of. Discussion on the points of discord between religion and science was very frequent, but Donovan rarely joined in it, partly because he was taciturn, partly because he was too much in the borderland of doubt to care to make any assertion, partly because of that strange and utterly unaccountable sense of reverence which was pained by hearing the Unknown—the possibly non-Existent—spoken of slightly. The discussion to-day on the existence of the soul was neither edifying nor interesting. Donovan, who was in the worst of tempers, was chafed and irritated by the worthlessness of the arguments on each side. “Pack of idiots!” he exclaimed to himself, “if they must babble about



what they don't understand, why can't they put a little life into their talk?" He wandered back to his own all too haunting thoughts, but was recalled by the peculiarly confident tone of his neighbour, a young fellow of about two and twenty, who was eagerly attempting to prove the truth of the theory admirably summed up once by old Mrs. Doery, that "Death ends us all up."

"Well," remarked the student, as if he had got hold of a clinching argument, "I've been at work here for some time, but I never yet found a soul in the dissecting-room."

There was a general laugh, but it was checked by a quick retort, uttered in a voice which was made powerful by a ring of indignation and a slight touch of scorn.

"No one but a fool would look for one there."

"Bravo!" cried Donovan, delighted with the ready reply, though by no means convinced of the existence of the soul.

He glanced with some interest and a good deal of curiosity at the speaker. He was a certain Brian Osmond, a clever, hard-working, silent fellow, with the reputation of being stiff and very "churchy," the latter accusation having probably for its sole foundation the fact that his father was a clergyman. Looking at him to-day, Donovan for the first time felt

drawn towards him ; he admired him and respected him, as much perhaps for his subsequent silence as for his sharp retort. Few know when they have said enough. Apparently Brian Osmond did know, for he spoke no more, but went on with his work with a slightly heightened colour, as if the speaking had been something of an effort.

That night it so happened that Donovan and three other students were told off for duty in the accident ward. There was a patient who needed constant attendance ; these four were to take it in turns to be with him, two at a time. Not a little to his satisfaction, Donovan found that Brian Osmond was to be his companion—he really wanted to know him ; they were now of course on speaking terms, but, being both reserved men, they would never have got nearer had not an opportunity such as this been thrown in their way.

Now all the evening Donovan's fierce craving for play had been growing more and more irresistible ; when the other two students relieved guard, and he and Brian Osmond went to rest in an adjoining room, the first thing he saw on the table was a pack of cards. He did not say anything, but Brian at once caught sight of them.

“Hullo ! these fellows have been playing,” he

remarked. "They've done their game—let's have a turn at *écarté* to keep us awake."

Donovan did not speak an assent, but he took up the pack; if his hands had been steel, and the cards so many magnets, the power which drew him towards them could not have been more irresistible; the struggle within him was ceasing, a delicious calm set in. The mere sight of the cards was to him what the sight of bread is to a hungry man—to feel them once more in his hands was bliss. Was the world, after all, so grey? With scarcely a word he shuffled and dealt. His hand was one to make the heart of a card-player leap within him, the old passion had him well in its grip, the old fierce, delicious excitement sent the blood coursing at double time through his veins; after years of plodding work, after weeks of blank depression, this was rapture.

"Stop a minute," said Brian; "we didn't settle points. I draw the line at sixpence—is that too mild for you?"

Donovan produced a handful of coins from his pocket; among them was the sixpence with the hole in it—Gladys' sixpence—he saw it at once, and that instant her face rose before him in its purity and guilelessness. Then the delicious calm gave place to deadly struggle, his better self pleading eagerly—"This play calls

out all the bad in you, makes you the direct opposite of all that is pure and noble, all that is like Gladys."

But the lower self was ready with bitter taunts—"What, a strong man letting himself be bound by a mere ideal of a girl—a girl whom he has renounced—who is nothing to him! Have your game, and don't be a fool."

"You willed not to play, and it was the right you willed," urged one voice.

"Nothing is so weak as to stick to a mistake," urged the other; "there's no such thing as actual right or wrong—you can't prove it."

"There is right and wrong, there is purity of heart," urged the higher counsellor—"think of Gladys."

He did think, and it saved him.

Brian thought him slightly crazed, for he threw down the cards, got up from the table, and began to pace the room like a caged lion. Before very long, however, he quieted down, threw himself back in a chair, and in a matter-of-fact tone which belied his look of exhaustion, said,

"I beg your pardon, Osmond, but I can't play; the fact is, it makes a sort of demon of me."

Brian was surprised, for Donovan looked much too stern and self-controlled for his idea

of a gambler, but the struggle he had just witnessed proved the truth of the words.

"I suppose there is a tremendous fascination in cards, if you're anything of a player," he said. "I'm sorry I suggested a game."

"You couldn't know whom you had to deal with," returned Donovan, gathering up the cards—he was strong enough to touch them now. "Who would have thought that in this trumpery pack there was such tremendous power? It's horribly humiliating when one comes to think of it."

Feeling that he owed Brian a sort of apology for spoiling his game, he overcame his reserve, and continued,

"You wouldn't wonder that I daren't play, if you knew how low these magical things have dragged me. The last time I played, which is getting on for three years ago, I won a small fortune, which my adversary had in his turn won at Monte Carlo. On losing it he absconded, hinting to his wife that he should commit suicide. The horror of that was enough to make one renounce gambling, you would think. Lately, though, the craving after it has come back; but I see it won't do for me even in moderation. I suppose, having once thoroughly abused a thing, you're never fit to use it again."

"That holds, I think, in some other cases," said Brian.

"You're thinking of the drunkard and total abstinence," said Donovan, laughing. "Never mind, I don't object to being taken as a parallel case, for it's perfectly true—the two vices are very nearly akin. I daresay it's as hard to you to understand or sympathise with my temptation as it is to me to sympathise with the poor old fellow who shares my rooms, who is slowly drinking himself to death. No one can understand or make allowance for utterly unknown temptations."

"I don't know that," said Brian, slowly. "One man at least I know who can sympathise with anyone; but then he is that rare being—a Christ-like man."

"Rare indeed," said Donovan, drily; "not too much of that sort of thing in this nineteenth century. I see you think I speak bitterly; perhaps you are right. I speak as an unbeliever, and I can count on my fingers the Christians who have had so much as a kind word to give me."

Brian began to feel very much drawn to his companion; in their next interval of rest he took up the thread of the conversation again.

"That is almost too horrible to be believed," he said. "I know people are intolerant, but

that so few should have—" he paused for a word, and Donovan broke in.

"Mind I don't say I laid myself out for their kindness. I didn't cringe and fawn or disguise the views I then held; but to be conscious that people would receive you if you were judiciously hypocritical, does not raise your opinion either of them or of their religion."

"No, indeed!" said Brian.

"Besides," resumed Donovan, "if they are in earnest, as people who have made such a profession ought to be, surely they must see that isolating atheists as if they were lepers is the worst thing both for themselves and the atheists. I don't think it's in a man to feel kindly to those who treat him unjustly, and the good folks of our neighbourhood drove me as fast as they could into misanthropy. One man put a spoke in the wheel, but he was an atheist—the prophet of atheism."

"What, Raeburn?"

Donovan nodded an assent.

"I don't know that I agree with his views now any more than I agree with Christianity, but I do believe that man gets hold of selfish fellows and makes them downright ashamed of their selfishness."

"You have heard him lecture?"

“Only once, but I shall never forget it. The magnetism of the man is extraordinary; he means what he says, and has had to suffer for it—that, I expect, gives him his tremendous force. If you Christians only knew the harm you do your cause by injustice, you’d be more careful. St. Paul is not the only one who, for the sake of what he believed the truth, has borne imprisonment, stonings, watchings, fastings, perils of robbers, and perils of his own countrymen. I don’t wonder at St. Paul making converts, and I don’t wonder at Raeburn making converts, and as long as you persecute him, as long as you are uncharitable to him, you may be sure atheism will spread.”

“If you admired him so much, why did you not go to hear him again?”

“Because, when I could have heard him again, I had sunk too low. I had suffered a great injustice, and it had made me hate the whole race—for a time. Once I half thought of going to see him, for I was in great need of work; but, do you know, I was ashamed to. Christians may scoff at the idea of being ashamed to go to see Raeburn, but anyone who is living in the vindictive misanthropy which I was living in may well be ashamed to go to one who leads a self-denying, hard-working life for others, whatever his creed.”



"But you do not go to hear him now, though you still admire him?"

"No, for I've found the great blank in atheism; it can never satisfy a man's needs."

"Have you ever given the other side a hearing?" asked Brian.

"A reading, not a hearing; it is difficult to do that without either being a hypocrite or disturbing a congregation."

Brian seemed about to speak, but he checked himself, and very soon they were called to go into the ward. They did not have much more conversation that night, but their friendship was begun; when Donovan gave confidence and liking at all, he gave them without stint, and Brian, in spite of his reputation for stiffness and punctilious observance, became more and more fond of him. In some points they were a little like each other, in some they were curiously different, but both had found—Brian as a high churchman, Donovan as an agnostic—that the secret of life is loving self-sacrifice.

They were exactly fitted to rub off each other's angles.

## CHAPTER IX.

CHARLES OSMOND.

Thou art no Sabbath drawler of old saws,  
 Distill'd from some worm-canker'd homily;  
 But spur'd at heart to fieriest energy  
 To embattail and to wall about thy cause  
 With iron-worded proof, hating to hark  
 The humming of the drowsy pulpit-drone  
 Half God's good Sabbath, while the worn-out clerk  
 Brow-beats his desk below. Thou from a throne  
 Mounted in heaven wilt shoot into the dark  
 Arrows of lightnings. I will stand and mark.

TENNYSON.

THE deadly temptation of that night did not return, but, though Donovan was no longer torn by the fierce, inward struggle, what had happened made him think more seriously. He was disappointed and perplexed to find that, after these years of struggle and repression, the old passionate desire was still as strong as ever within him. With all his endeavours—and he knew that he had honestly tried with all his might—he had only been able to check the

outward actions; he had cut off bravely enough the visible growth, he had, as it were, razed to the ground this evil passion, but its roots were still untouched. He smiled a little as he thought of it.

“Radical that I am, can I fail to root out the evil in myself? Professing to go straight to the root of all grievances, must I yet be unable to get rid of this?”

He was obliged to own that his power was absolutely limited to the suppression of evil in action; he had come to the very end of his strength, he might by great effort be pure in deed, but pure in heart he could never make himself. Yet actual purity was no dream. Gladys was pure, purity was written on every line of her face; he could not imagine her harbouring an impure thought or desire for an instant. Yet he knew that she was not in herself perfect; he was not at all the sort of man to fall blindly in love; he had noticed many trifling faults in Gladys, had heard her speak hastily, had discovered that she was a little too desirous of standing first with those she loved, was apt to exaggerate and to tell small incidents with pretty little imaginative touches of her own. She was not faultless, but, in spite of occasional and momentary falls, she was pervaded by a purity of thought and deed, of

word and desire, which to Donovan was utterly incomprehensible. He was conscious, as he had latterly been with Dot, that she was breathing an altogether different atmosphere. He was like the shaded valley, little air and little light reaching him, she was like a beautiful snowy mountain peak in sunshine; a passing fault like a cloud might for a time dim the brightness, but only for a time—the sunshine would illumine all again. And then his own metaphor flashed a conviction on him—it must be a reflected brightness, a reflected loveliness that he saw in Gladys!

Unsatisfied as he had long been with agnosticism, he was now fully aware that he had reached the limit of what it could give him; he had tried with all his might to live a self-denying, pure life, and in some degree he had succeeded, but if he lived a hundred years he saw no chance of getting further; there would of course be constant opportunities for fresh self-denial, but he could not of himself ever attain to purity of heart. What then? There was a great want somewhere; he was incomplete, he reproached himself with being so, but yet had he not striven to the utmost? Might there not be a living Purity, a living Strength other than himself, to fill this void, to round off this incompleteness? It was only a speculation, but

speculations are helpful if they go hand-in-hand with honest work ; if they lead to nothing, they at least teach us our own ignorance, and they may lead towards the unveiling of the hidden truth.

One Sunday, in January, it happened that Donovan was out alone, for though Rouge generally went with him on his long Sunday rambles, the afternoon had seemed so raw and cold and unpromising that he had preferred to stay indoors. It certainly was not a comfortable sort of day, but the weekly chance of a twenty mile stretch was not to be lightly lost, and, rain or shine, Donovan generally spent the greater part of the Sunday in exercise. Even had he not been exceedingly fond of walking, there was Waif to be considered ; as it was, both dog and master looked forward to the day of rest, and used it to the best of their present abilities.

It was quite dark by the time they had reached the suburbs ; walking on at a brisk pace they made their way further into London. The bells had ceased ringing, and, becoming aware that he was exceedingly hungry, Donovan glanced at his watch, finding to his surprise that it was already a quarter to eight. They were passing through a very poor neighbourhood, and he had just turned from a crowd-

ed thoroughfare into a quiet side street, when a man, flushed, bare-headed, and breathless, dashed out of a building to the left, and in his haste almost knocked Donovan over.

"Beg pardon, sir," he panted; "a lady in a fit in the church, and heaven knows where I'm to find a doctor!"

"Better have me, I'm half a doctor," said Donovan. "Be quick, anything's better than losing time."

"A providence!" gasped the verger. "This way, sir, this way."

Now the church had been built on what an architect would have considered a very "ineligible site," for it was wedged in between the houses in a way which cruelly spoilt its beauty. The site, however, was in other respects exceedingly "eligible," that is to say, it was within a stone's throw of hundreds of the poor and ignorant. It was not, however, a convenient church for people afflicted with fits, for there was no separate entrance to the vestry, and the vestry was at the east end. The verger, followed by Donovan and Waif, walked straight up the church, to the distraction of the congregation; some people were amused, some were scandalised at the entrance of the fox-terrier. One of the churchwardens tried to drive him back; but Waif's master had called him to

heel, and to heel he would keep, though all the churchwardens in the world were to set upon him.

Donovan found his patient stretched on the floor in an epileptic fit, an old woman kneeling beside her, vainly trying to restrain her wild movements. The little room was used as a choir vestry, two unused surplices were hanging on the wall, he snatched one of them down, crushed the white folds remorselessly together, and put them between his patient's teeth. Presently she grew quieter. Donovan, seeing a half open door, glanced in, and found a second room, with a sofa and a larger window; with the verger's help he carried the girl in, and soon she became herself again. He decreed, however, that she should rest where she was till the service was over, when the verger could get her a cab.

Leaving her under her mother's care, he went back into the little outer vestry; but realising that Waif might be considered *de trop* in a church he would not again go down the aisle; besides, it might be better that he should see his patient fairly out of her trouble. The waiting, however, was dull; to pass the time he noiselessly opened the vestry door and, through the narrowest of openings, took a glance at the congregation. They appeared to

be listening very intently. He could not see the preacher, but he could hear him quite plainly, and instinctively he too began to listen. How many years was it since he had heard a sermon? Very nearly seven, and the last had been that never-to-be-forgotten sermon in the school chapel. Even now the recollection of it brought an angry glow to his face.

But the remembrance died away as soon as he began to listen to the clear tones of the present speaker, whose rather uncommon delivery attracted him not a little; it was manly, straightforward, quite free from the touch of patronage or the conventional sanctimonious drawl which goes far towards making many sermons unpalatable.

"I speak now more particularly to those who have some faith in God, but whose faith is weak, variable, largely mingled with distrust. I ask you to look at your everyday life and tell me this: Which suffers most, the father who disciplines, or the child who is disciplined? You who have had anything to do with little children will surely answer, 'It is the one who disciplines who suffers most—the father bears his own pain and his child's as well.'

"Look once more at your daily life and answer me one more question. Two friends are estranged, which suffers most, the one who



doubts or the one who is unjustly doubted? You who can speak from experience will, I think, answer without hesitation, 'the one who is doubted.'

"Believe me, you who are in the twilight of a half faith, you who are in the darkness of scepticism, you who are hungering after you scarcely know what, hungering perhaps for an unknown goodness, a far distant holiness, your pain, cruel and gnawing and remorseless as it is, is a mere nothing compared with the pain which He whom you doubt suffers.

"Yes, look again at your own experience, realise as keenly as you can what is the pain of being unjustly doubted. Take it all ways, the sting of the injustice, the grievous disappointment in your friend, the dull ache of forsakenness, that is your own share, but you bear your friend's as well. There is his disappointment, his loneliness, his sense of betrayal, his indignation to be taken into account, the thought of it weighs on you more than your own personal pain. Oh! without question the pain of the one doubted is keener than the pain of the one who doubts, it is double pain. And in proportion to the strength of the love will be the sharpness of the suffering.

"To infinite, unthinkable love, therefore, we who doubt must bring infinite, unthinkable pain.

"It can hardly be, however, that in this congregation there have not been many dissentient thoughts during to-night's sermon. Even as I read my text I wondered how many will object to those words, 'the Father of lights with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.'

"Father! How many shrink from using the word! Sometimes they are people who tell you they believe in 'a God;' I notice that they always use the word 'a,' they do not say 'we believe in *the* God.' Sometimes they are people who accept the latter part of the text only, they believe in a 'force' in which there is 'no variableness.' Sometimes they believe in an 'impersonal God,' which—allowing that by person you mean the 'ego,' the spirit—is about equal to speaking of an 'unspiritual God.' I do not wish to say one harsh word about those of you who hold such views, but before you urge again the old objections, 'degrading ideas,' 'anthropomorphism,' and such like, I should like you to ask yourselves, with perfect honesty, this question: 'Did not my first objection to the word father rise from dislike to the necessary sequence that I was His child, rather than from real belief that the term was degrading to the Deity?'

"Spiritual life has its analogies with natural

life ; there does come a time when, with the consciousness of a certain strength, we long to be free agents, to shake off all authority, to go out in the world and fend for ourselves. And the real recognition of a father implies obedience, and obedience is hard to all men.

“But, on the other hand, I must defend my use of the word father from misconceptions. Not in the Mahomedan sense of a gigantic man do we call God our Father. The term given to us by Christ brings to our mind a conception of love and protection, it ought to rouse in us the child sense of reverence, obedience—in a word, ‘sonship.’ ‘Words!’ you exclaim, ‘mere terms!’ But remember that we must use finite terms in this life, even in speaking of infinity. You feel the terms to be a limitation? Perhaps that is well ; to be conscious of limitation points to a larger, fuller, grander possibility dawning for us in the hereafter. Why should we for that reason be too proud to use the grand, simple Anglo-Saxon word ‘father’? You will not better it with all your laborious efforts, your many worded and complicated substitutes.

“Using, then, this much abused term, let us turn back to our recollections of childhood. Some of us at least—I hope very many—have had fathers worthy of the name. We did not understand our father, but we revered and loved

him, he was at once friend and counsellor, our standard in everything. What would have been his feeling if in later life we had doubted him, doubted his very love for us, cast off our family name, lived in independence and lovelessness? The really loving father would be grieved, cut to the heart, never vindictively wrathful.

“This father I would take as the shadow of the Divine reality. I cannot doubt that God has often been represented to you as a jealous potentate, an autocrat with human passions; but I would beg you to-night to put those thoughts from you, to turn instead to the revelation of Jesus Christ, the revelation, that is, of the ‘Father of lights,’ the Father in whom is no variableness or shadow of turning, who in spite of our sin, our doubt, our unworthiness, will be our Father for ever and ever.

“My friends, my brothers, will you not think of the infinite pain which is caused by the doubt of one heart? Will you not struggle to free yourselves from it?

“‘But,’ I think I hear some one say, ‘this man can know nothing about doubt or unbelief; if he did he would know the impossibility of willing to believe, willing to free yourself from doubt.’

“Yes, that is true. To will belief is quite im-

possible. By struggling to free yourselves from doubt, I mean making a constant effort to live the Christ-life—the life of self-renunciation that God has consecrated and ordained as the high road to Himself. There may be some here who know nothing of God, some who know Him in part, but to all alike there is but that one road which can lead to knowledge of things divine—the road of the cross.

“‘The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus,’ says St. Paul, ‘has made me free from the law of sin and death.’

“The law that is of loving self-sacrifice, Christ’s new law, is the law which sets us free from selfishness and ignorance of God.

“And that hard road of self-denial, so uncongenial to us all in itself, has proved to everyone who has taken his way honestly along it, in very truth the way of light. For the Father of lights will Himself meet us as we walk that road, when we are ‘yet a great way off’ He will appear to us from afar, saying—‘Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee.’

“Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all we can ask or think, &c.”

The congregation rose, Donovan pushed the door to.

"H'm, so that's what you think about it," he muttered to himself, giving his mind a sort of matter-of-fact twist because he was conscious of a certain choking sensation in his throat. "Yet could anyone imagine such a Being? It would take a strangely pure mind to form such a conception. If there were a God, He must be like that; the utter lovelessness of Doery's 'offended autocrat' had been its own disproof. Could there be truth in that saying in the sermon on the mount, 'The pure in heart shall see God.'"

From a confused train of thought like this he was roused by the sound of one of Dot's favourite hymns, Newman's "Lead, kindly light, amid the encircling gloom." Why it had been such a favourite of hers he had never found out, it was hardly a child's hymn, and Dot had been the simplest of little children. Perhaps the pure Saxon English had attracted her, as it usually does attract simple childlike souls. How many times could Donovan remember playing the tune for her! He seemed now almost to hear the soft child-voice singing with the congregation. With almost painful intentness he listened, the words of the last verse floating in to him with perfect distinctness.

"So long Thy power hath blessed me, sure it still  
Will lead me on  
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till  
The night is gone.

And with the morn those angel faces smile,  
Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile."

He turned away with hot tears in his eyes. He had lost all his "angel faces," and did not yet believe that "the morn" was coming, he could not believe in the hereafter, and he had given up all that was beautiful in the present. Life will feel black to such.

He began to poke the fire, he picked up the crumpled surplice from the floor, folded it methodically, and laid it on the table, then, finding such work too mechanical to answer his purpose, he retreated into the inner vestry, and began to talk to his patient's mother.

Before very long there was a hum of voices in the next room, then the door opened and the vergier appeared, followed to Donovan's utter amazement by Brian Osmond.

"Hullo, who would have thought of seeing you here?" he exclaimed. "Why didn't you hurry to the rescue?"

"I was the other side of the choir, and didn't see what was up," said Brian; "the first thing I did see was the entrance of you and Waif. How's your patient?"

"All right again," said Donovan, "we must get her a cab."

"Brown will do that. You come with me now, I want you to see my father."

“Your father?”

“This is his church, did you not know?”

Was it then Brian's father who had been preaching? Donovan did not ask, but followed him into the other vestry, where several rather shabby-looking little boys were just disappearing through the doorway, having left what Mrs. Doery would have called their “whites” behind them. There was only one clergyman, he was standing by the fire talking to the organist, and Donovan had a minute or two in which to take a survey of him.

Charles Osmond was a man of eight and forty; he was tall, nearly six feet, squarely made rather, muscularly very strong, but constitutionally delicate. His character was much like his body; he united in a very rare way the man's strength and the woman's tenderness. Looking at him superficially, he seemed older than his years, for he was nearly bald, and the fringe of hair that remained round what he called his “tonsure” was quite grey; but his eyes were young, his voice was young; there was a sprightliness, almost a boyishness in his manner at times.

“Clever and honest, and not too clerical,” was Donovan's comment, the last adjective being, from his lips, of the nature of a compliment, for he had a great dislike of the clergy as



a class. He had received from individual members of the profession some injustice and no kindness, and he not unnaturally proceeded to judge them as a class, and to abuse them wholesale. A patient who has received mistaken treatment from a doctor, invariably scoffs at all doctors, and ever after terms them quacks. A client receiving an exorbitant bill from his solicitor, relieves his annoyance by proclaiming all lawyers to be grasping and avaricious. In this, as in other cases, a little fire kindles a great matter.

Charles Osmond turned in a minute or two, and Brian introduced Donovan.

"I saw you and your dog come in," he observed, with laughter in his eyes. "Now, if certain religious newspapers get hold of that incident, we shall have some beautiful paragraphs. 'Strange new innovation,' 'Canine processions,' etc. I hope your patient is better?"

By this time Donovan liked the man, instinctively liked and trusted him. Charles Osmond had a very strange fascination about him. He had an extraordinary power in his touch; to shake hands with him was to receive no conventional greeting, but to be taken closer to the man himself, to be assured of his hearty, honest sympathy. His eyes were to Donovan like Waif's eyes; all his soul seemed to look

out of them ; they were eyes which never looked in a hard way at people, never seemed to be forming an opinion about them, but, like the bright eager eyes of a dog, expressed almost as clearly as words, "let us come as near each other as we can."

He was a man who cared not a rush for what was said of people, a man who would have preferred dining with an excommunicated heretic to dining with the queen. He was no respecter of persons, and rather disliked official dignitaries as such, but he could admire worth whatever its surroundings, and he had a profound respect for man as man.

For a few minutes he was left alone with Donovan, while Brian and the verger were helping the patient to a cab.

Before this there had been ordinary small talk, a sort of jumble of epileptic fits, fox-terriers, Barnard and Bishop stoves, etc., but as soon as they were alone, Donovan, obeying the plea of those dog-like eyes, did draw a little nearer, a little more out of his shell.

"I heard the end of your sermon to-night," he said, rather abruptly. "It is the first I have heard for several years. If it wouldn't be asking too much, would you let me have it to read?"

"With all my heart, if it were readable," said

Mr. Osmond, with a humorous twinkle in his eyes, as he handed half a sheet of paper to Donovan, with a few notes written on it.

"Oh! you preach extempore. I am sorry," remarked Donovan.

"It is the only way for a church like mine," said Mr. Osmond. "But I can, if you like, give you plenty of sermons on that subject, and books too, much more to the point than anything you can have heard to-night."

"Thank you," said Donovan, "but I am afraid I must ungraciously refuse that offer. I have read some dozens of theological books to very little purpose, and have just made a clean sweep of them, and bought a polariser for my microscope with the proceeds."

"And find it of much more use, I daresay," said Mr. Osmond, laughing. "But if you cared enough for such matters to get and read theological books, why were you so many years without the far less tedious process of sermon hearing?"

"Because I am an agnostic," said Donovan, "and as there is no necessity, I do not care to stand, sit, and kneel through a meaningless form. I would not do it even to hear you again, and I own that I should like to hear you."

"Then any Sunday that you care to look in here at a quarter to eight, you shall find the

seat nearest the door empty," said Mr. Osmond. "Of course we extend the invitation to the dog as long as he'll sit quiet; I see you are inseparable. What an intelligent-looking mortal he is!"

"I could not quite tell you the number of times he has saved my life," said Donovan. "He won't defile your church; he's much more of a Christian than many church-goers I have known."

"Did you ever hear the story of the eccentric man of Bruges?" said Mr. Osmond. "He was passionately fond of his dogs; the *curé* remonstrated with him, and told him that if he went to heaven he must part with them. 'I will go nowhere,' exclaimed the good man, 'where I cannot take my dogs.'"

"Capital fellow!" said Donovan, laughing. "I quite agree with him."

By that time Brian had returned; the verger was beginning to turn out the gas.

"Come and have supper with us," said Mr. Osmond, as they walked together down the empty church.

"Thank you," replied Donovan, "I am afraid I must go home; I have been out most of the day."

"Microscope, or the old man of the sea?" questioned Brian.

“The latter,” said Donovan, with a laugh.  
“Good night.”

He whistled to Waif, and they disappeared in the dark street.

## CHAPTER X.

## WHAT IS FORGIVENESS ?

Skilful alike with tongue and pen,  
 He preached to all men everywhere  
 The Gospel of the Golden Rule,  
 The new commandment given to men,  
 Thinking the deed, and not the creed,  
 Would help us in our utmost need.  
 With reverent feet the earth he trod,  
 Nor banished Nature from his plan,  
 But studied still with deep research  
 To build the Universal Church,  
 Lofty as is the love of God,  
 And ample as the wants of man.

*Tales of a Wayside Inn.* LONGFELLOW.

AS he walked home, Donovan thought a good deal of the scene he had just left, and for the first time it struck him that the sermon had been rather an unusual one for such a congregation. Charles Osmond seemed to take it for granted that his people thought; the congregation was chiefly composed of working men and women and tradespeople, but he by no

means preached down to what some would have considered their level. He entered into all the questions of the day freely and fearlessly, took as much pains with his sermons as if they were to be preached before the most searching critics in the country, and avoided only the use of many-syllabled words—speaking, indeed, in almost pure Saxon-English, the “tongue understood of the people.”

How he came to be in such a place was another question which perplexed Donovan. Had he known the reason, he would have been doubly attracted to the man; but it was some time before he found out.

Charles Osmond's history was a strange one. He was exceedingly clever, an original sort of man, full of resources, intensely conscious of latent power which he might probably never have time or opportunity for bringing into exercise. But the strength of the man was in his extraordinary gift of insight; there was something almost uncanny about his power of reading people. He would have made a good diplomatist, a first-rate detective, had not his power of sympathy been quite as strong as his power of insight. He had that gift of “magnetism” which Donovan had ascribed to Raeburn; almost all who had anything to do with him were attracted, they scarcely knew why or

how. He had a way of treating each individual as if for the time being his only desire was to get nearer to him, and, although he was the most wide-minded of men, he could so concentrate his world-wide sympathy as to bring its full power to bear on one heart. His influence was simply marvellous! he was like a sort of sun; the coldest, most frozen, icebound natures melted in his genial presence. He could draw out the most reserved people in a way astonishing to themselves. He spoke little of "souls" in the lump, never obtruded the conventional red-tapism of clerical life, but each individual was to him a wonderful and absorbing study. He rarely even in thought massed them together as "his parish," but took them as his inner circle of brothers and sisters, a tiny fragment of the one great family.

Of course, he was almost worshipped by those who knew him, but with a certain class of character he could make no way. He had one great fault—a fault which repelled some people, generally the "unco guid or rigidly righteous," or those comfortable people who feel no need or desire for sympathy. His fault was this—he was too conscious of his influence; he knew that he had exceptional gifts, and all his life long he had been struggling with that deadliest of foes, conceit. He had the exquisite candour



to call his fault by its true name, a very rare virtue; and few things angered him more than to hear conceit confounded with self-respect or proper pride of independence. Conceit was conceit pure and simple; the word pride had lost its objectionable meaning. To tell a man that he was proud would make him feel almost gratified, would give him a sense of dignity, but to tell him he was conceited would be sure to give him a hard home-thrust. So he went on in his straightforward way, struggling with his deadly hindrance, daily—almost hourly—checking himself, pulling himself up, as he drifted into the all too natural habit of self-approval. He had not crushed his foe as yet, but he had risen immensely by the effort. It had helped greatly to increase the manliness, the honesty, the large-minded tolerance which characterized him. Intensely conscious that he had not “already attained, neither was already perfect,” he was a thousand times more helpful to those in need than many of his brethren who looked down on him, blandly content with their own progress in righteousness—at any rate, convinced that Charles Osmond’s very apparent fault must unfit him for his work. Certainly it *did* prevent his ever assuming the conventional tone of priest to penitent; he never felt himself on a higher platform than

his congregation, but perhaps for that very reason he succeeded in attracting, by his brotherliness rather than his priestliness, those whom no one else could attract.

The reason that he was still to be found toiling away in an obscure parish in one of the poor parts of London was not without its pathos. Very few were aware of the real cause. Naturally he was not without a good deal of ambition, and at a certain time in his life his advances had been rapid. He had written a series of articles which had brought him into notice, and almost at the same time two offers were made to him. The one was the offer of a living in London worth perhaps £300 a year, the other was to a position of great responsibility, invariably made the stepping-stone to high places. Charles Osmond was human; it cost him a great deal to give up the prospect of rapid and honourable preferment, and in refusing the offer he gave up many other things which he much desired—the opportunity of mixing with his equals, the chance of intellectual society, the greater ease of speaking to a highly educated congregation. In many respects he was, and knew that he was, admirably fitted for such a position, but, weighing it all in his honest mind, he came to the conclusion that he could not trust himself to accept

it. His power, his influence, his worldly position would be immensely raised; he did not feel himself sufficiently strong to resist such increased temptations.

So the chance of promotion was honourably rejected, and Charles Osmond settled down to terribly up-hill work in London. Life never could be easy to such a man; he was too sensitive, too wide-minded, too entirely saturated with the spirit of Christ to be ever without his share of Christ's burden—the burden of the suffering, the sinning, the doubting. He was, too, in a certain sense an isolated man; all through his life he had been greatly misunderstood. By one set he was stigmatized as "High Church," by another as "dangerously Broad," by a third as "almost a Dissenter." Attacked thus from all points, his life would have been almost intolerable had it not been for the growing love and devotion of his own particular people. His church became a sort of Cave of Adullam—a refuge for numbers of the distressed; and as years went by, the work began to tell, and a real improvement could be noted. This alone was almost enough to make up for the hostility which he encountered in other quarters, though he was not the sort of man to whom persecution could ever be otherwise than painful. He had lately incurred

great odium by urging in public that Raeburn, the atheist, ought to be treated with as much justice, and courtesy, and consideration as if he had been a Christian. The narrow-minded were thereby much scandalized; the atheists began to believe that it was *possible* for a clergyman to be honest and unprejudiced.

The walk home after Sunday evening service was generally the part of the day's work which Brian dreaded most for his father. He knew it was then that the burden pressed most heavily on him, for the sin and evil were fearfully apparent in those back streets, and Charles Osmond keenly alive to it all, wearied with the exertions of the day, and aware of his inability to cope with the immense wickedness around, often fell a prey to the haunting consciousness of failure and to blank depression.

This evening, however, as they parted from Donovan at the church door, he seemed quite unusually brisk and animated, and though generally too tired to care to speak an unnecessary word, he had not walked a hundred yards before he began to question his son.

"So that is your new friend?"

"Yes," returned Brian, "what do you think of him?"

"I think he's a friend worth having."

"I knew you would like him," said Brian,

triumphantly, "if it were only because he is one of your 'sceps.' Is there an honest atheist in the world whom you don't like, I wonder!"

"I hope not," said Charles Osmond, with a touch of quiet humour in his tone.

"I wouldn't say much about Farrant before you had seen him, for he's not the sort of fellow to be known at second hand, and I was determined you should somehow meet him. Odd that such a chance as that girl's illness should have brought you together after all."

"Just as well," said Charles Osmond. "He is a fellow to be led, not driven, or to be driven only by the One who knows when to use the snaffle, when the curb."

"Yes, one is afraid of pushing him the wrong way rather," said Brian, "even, I mean, in chance talk without any intention of pushing at all."

"That we always must feel in speaking to those whom the world has held at arm's length. I should like to know what helped to bring that fellow to atheism, have you any idea?"

"The un-Christlikeness of Christians, I fancy—and something he said of injustice with which he had been treated, but he has only once spoken of it at all and then merely because he grew hot at the mention of Raeburn."

Charles Osmond sighed heavily, it was

another instance added to the hundreds he already knew of the harm caused by injustice and want of charity. He fell into a sorrowful reverie, but roused himself after a time to ask what his son knew of Donovan's history.

"I know very little," said Brian, "he seems to be alone in the world, and he is very poor. We are of the same year; he came up at October two years ago and got a scholarship at once. He's by far the cleverest fellow we have, no one else has a chance while he's there; any amount of brains, you know, and works furiously—as if it were the only thing he cared for."

"I thought as mnch," observed Charles Osmond. "There's the dog though—wonderful to see the devotion between those two; no man in the world, as the old saying goes, who can't find a dog and a woman to love him. Who is the 'old man of the sea' you spoke of?"

"The queerest old fellow you ever saw who has come to live with him, an old captain something, I forget the name. Quite of another grade to Farrant, and trying to live with I should fancy, for he's a regular old tippler, but he's devoted to 'Donovan,' as he always calls him."

"Oh! that's his name, is he connected with the Donovans of Kilbeggan, I wonder? grannie has their family tree by heart."

"There's nothing Irish about Farrant," said Brian.

"I'm not so sure of that, I fancy there's a good deal of humour in him, stifled by circumstances perhaps, and I'll stake my reputation as an observer that somewhere in his ancestry you'll find an Italian?"

Brian laughed; his father was very fond of tracing the tokens of differing nationalities and had many theories on the subject; sometimes his theories fell wide of the mark, however, and Brian was inclined to think he had made a bad shot this time, for to him Donovan seemed entirely—almost typically—English.

A few days after this Donovan was induced to dine with the Osmonds, not without much persuasion from Brian, who was now sufficiently his friend to be comfortably rude to him.

"You'll grow into a bear, a misanthrope, if you never go anywhere," he urged, as Donovan pleaded his want of time. "You'll addle your brains, knock up before the exam, grow into the 'dull boy' of the proverb. I can see that this unmitigated grind is beginning to tell on you already; you look as old again as you did before the October term."

Donovan flushed a little at this, said abruptly that he would come, and gave a rapid turn to the conversation.

The Osmonds lived in Bloomsbury, in an old house which had belonged to Charles Osmond's grandfather in the days when Bloomsbury was a fashionable region. It was a comfortable, roomy house, not too far from the parish to be inconvenient, and all the better for being far removed from West End gaieties, as the Osmonds were something of Bohemians, dined at an unpardonably early hour, and rather set at naught the conventionalities of life.

Donovan was shown into a charming, old-fashioned drawing-room, not old-fashioned according to the recent high art revival of spindle-legged forms and Queen Anne uncomfortable-ness, but such a room as might have been found at the beginning of the century. Everything was massive and good of its kind. There were capacious arm-chairs and most restful sofas covered with the real old chintz worth any number of modern cretonnes, an old-fashioned Erard piano that had seen good service, beautifully inlaid tables, some good oil paintings, and a delightful array of books in long, low book-cases, bound in old yellow calf and that everlasting morocco which was somehow procurable in the good old times when book-binding was an art, not a trade. A few modern knick-knacks here and there relieved the stiffness of the furniture, while a faint smell of dried roses



was wafted from old china bowls and vases which would have awakened the envy of anyone suffering from the china mania.

Mrs. Osmond, Brian's grandmother, just completed the old-world picture. Donovan fell in love with her at once. She was indeed a very beautiful old lady, her silvery hair, her mild, blue eyes, her peculiarly sweet smile were all in their way perfect, but it was the exquisite courtesy, the delicate grace of the past day that attracted everyone so irresistibly, that beautiful, old-fashioned sweetness of manner which has somehow perished in the heat and struggle—the "hurrying life" of the nineteenth century. She made him a charming, gracious, little curtsey, then held out her hand, and Donovan, Republican though he was, did not shake it, but, acting as he occasionally did by impulse, bent low and kissed it.

The old lady seemed touched and gratified; she at once introduced the names of her old friends the Donovans of Kilkeggan, and there ensued an animated discussion as to the younger branches of the family, resulting in the oft-made discovery that the world is smaller than we think, and that Donovan's grandfather, General Donovan, had been Mrs. Osmond's old play-fellow. The gong sounded, and the dear, old, stately lady went down to dinner on Donovan's

arm, still talking of her young days in Ireland, then drifting on to the London life of long ago, dwelling in the loving, tender way of the old on the celebrities of her time, the Kembles, Jenny Lind, Grisi, Sontag, Miss Stephens, and Braham; then on to the Chartist rising of '48, when Charles Osmond took his turn and spoke of the "Christian Socialism" scheme, from which they passed to the Radicalism of to-day, a subject which Donovan himself would not have ventured to introduce in a clergyman's house, but which he found discussed with perfect fairness. Indeed, though Charles Osmond rarely meddled with politics, his work lay so entirely among "the people" that he was really able to see matters from their point of view, and in the main he was ready to agree with Donovan.

About the house, or rather the home, there was the same atmosphere as at Porthkerran, the same wideness of sympathy, the same loving regard for the work and interests of others, the same "one and all" principle carried into beautiful practice. The parish was not made a bore to the other members of the family, Brian's work was not obtruded in a tiresome way, nor Mrs. Osmond's manifold feminine occupations; all was well balanced, well regulated, and Donovan realised how perfect a home can be in

which are the three generations. Past, present, and future, when really united, do make the strongest threefold cord, and perhaps no house is quite complete without the quick perception of the young, the steady judgment of the middle-aged, the golden experience of the old.

Part of the evening Donovan spent alone with Charles Osmond in his study, a comfortable room, methodically arranged, and lined with books, theological, anti-theological, and scientific. Judged by his books, it might perhaps have been hard to say which of Charles Osmond's abusers were right; whether he was really high, broad, or half a dissenter; perhaps he was a little of all three, or perhaps he had reached above and beyond those earthly distinctions.

However this might be, as the two sat that evening over their coffee, Donovan fairly forgot he was speaking to that, to him, obnoxious being—a clergyman. Not even to Dr. Tremain had he ever talked with such perfect openness. Those dog-like eyes, with their constant appeal, "let us come nearer," were utterly irresistible. He found himself almost thinking aloud, and as his thinking meant great questioning, the possibility of having a being outside himself capable of listening, sympathising, and answering was a rare delight. And because he was con-

scious of Charles Osmond's unasserted but very real superiority, he cared not what he said, felt no restriction, no fear of going too far, or of giving too much confidence. The really clever, really great, really good, inspire trust, where the mediocre inspire dread.

As they talked, a little of Donovan's private history, which Charles Osmond had speculated about, was revealed. They had been speaking of Mill's notable allowance that, on the whole, men could not do better than try to imitate the life of Christ.

"But," urged Donovan, "however much one may resolve to do so, I find endless difficulties when it comes to actual practice. Take this, for instance—I wish to find what is Christ's law of forgiveness, and am met with such contradictions as these: I am first told to offer the other cheek, to let my cloak follow my coat, not to resist evil. I am told another time to bring the matter before witnesses, before the church, and, if all is of no avail, to let my enemy be to me as a heathen man and a publican. How do you explain that?"

"I think the first referred to injuries received by a Christian from an unbeliever, the second to injuries received from a fellow-Christian," said Charles Osmond.

"Then what is an atheist to do when injured

by a Christian?" asked Donovan. "I will tell you the actual case, and then you will see the difficulty. A certain cousin of mine has defrauded me of my property. I have actual proof, though unfortunately not legal proof, that he destroyed my father's last will; he then married my mother, and when I came of age coolly turned me out of the house without a farthing. He now lives on my estate, spends my money, enjoys himself thoroughly, as far as I know, and kindly condescends to make me an allowance of £100 a year, though the wretch knows that I know of his villainy."

"You can't bring an action against him?"

"Unfortunately not. It is too great a risk. There is only one living witness of the destroyed will, and the expenses of a lawsuit would be enormous. Now, what I want to know is, what you expect me to feel towards that man?"

"It is a hard case," said Charles Osmond. "I should like to know what you do feel."

"All I have been able to do is to will to think of him as little as possible. When I do think of him, I confess that I often get red-hot with indignation. Happily, I've plenty of work and need not dwell on it, so that except twice a year, when his beggarly cheques come in, I nearly forget his existence. If this is letting

him be to me a heathen and a publican, I have so far fulfilled the Christian law, but——”

“Ah! yes, I’m glad you put in a but,” said Charles Osmond. “For though, after you have done all in your power to reconcile and win back your enemy, you are told to leave him, and have no more to do with him, you must remember that that command pre-supposes that you are a Christian, and therefore one who loves all men, who recognizes the universal brotherhood, who tries to imitate the One who makes his sun to shine on the evil as well as on the good. The very first principles of Christianity show that you must love this man, though he is your enemy, and though it may be best for you to have no personal communication with him.”

“You mean I must love Ellis Farrant? It is impossible. You’ve no conception what a scoundrel he is. I could horsewhip him with the greatest pleasure.”

“Then, of course, you have not forgiven him?”

“No, I have not,” said Donovan, emphatically. “And I don’t see how you can expect me to while every day the fellow is adding to his sin, while every day he’s defrauding me of my own.”

"You must not think me hard on you," said Charles Osmond. "Your feeling is exceedingly natural, and I think perhaps you can't get much further than this until you believe in God. It was Christ who taught us what real forgiveness is. Now you tell me that although you do not believe in God, and regard Christ merely as a very good man, yet you consider the ideal God as a very beautiful ideal."

"Yes," said Donovan.

"Well, then, just listen to me while I put your words as though they were spoken by the ideal God. 'This man is mine, I caused him to be, gave him all that he possesses, he owes me love and obedience, for years he has defrauded me of both, defrauded me of my due, and he has done it wilfully. I am full of indignation, and I will not to think of him any more. To love him is impossible, he is a perfect scoundrel, and every day he is adding to his sin.' The God in whom I believe did not speak like this; you will allow that if He had thus spoken He would not have been an ideal God at all. Instead of thinking of the rights of which He had been defrauded, He thought first of the child of His who was defrauding Him, how miserable his existence was in reality, how everything was distorted to his view so that he had even lost sight of their original relationship, and

regarded his Father as an angry tyrant. Somehow the child must be made to understand that although it had sinned, its Father, being its Father, was only longing to forgive it, to break down the barrier which had risen between them. He revealed His wonderful love in such a way that the simplest could not fail to see it, His forgiveness was there, waiting for all who would take it. It was not a forgiveness to be obtained after much pleading, it was there as a free gift for all who had the least real and honest wish to be reconciled. That is the forgiveness of God, and the example which you must follow."

"It is impossible," said Donovan, with sad emphasis.

"Perhaps it may be until you have realised what God has forgiven you."

"But how am I to love what is hateful?"

"I never asked you to."

"The man is utterly hateful, a lying, deceitful, hypocritical knave."

"No man is altogether evil, there is latent good in him that you cannot perceive. I don't ask you to love the evil in him, but to love him because he is a man. He is your brother whether you will or not, and if you want to imitate Christ you must love him."

Donovan shook his head, and sighed.



"It's no good, I can hardly make myself even wish to love him ; it's somehow against one's sense of justice."

" ' Though justice be thy plea, consider this, that in the course of justice none of us should see salvation,' " quoted Charles Osmond, smiling. "But don't think I am speaking easily of the thing, forgiveness *is* hard, in a case like yours it is frightfully hard. I have merely told you what I consider ideal forgiveness, if you aim at the highest you will often and often fall short of the mark."

"The worst of it is this struggling to copy the life of Christ is such frightfully discouraging work," said Donovan. "The more one tries the harder it gets, and one is always coming to some new demand which it is almost impossible to meet."

"Did you ever climb an Alp?" asked Charles Osmond. "As you get higher you find it harder work, the air is more rarefied, the way more abrupt ; but when you reach the summit, what do you care for all the labour? The work was weary, but the end was worth all! When the full vision breaks upon us——" he paused, and there was a minute's silence, but the light in his face was more eloquent than words.

"If there be a summit and a vision," said Donovan, in a low voice.

"Though it tarry, wait for it," was Charles Osmond's answer.

After that they passed to matters nearer the surface, and before long Brian came down, and the three drew in their chairs to the fire, and sat smoking and talking till late in the evening. Charles Osmond had, in spite of his harassing life, kept a wonderful reserve fund of high spirits, and just now in the relief of having to do with one so honest and high-minded as Donovan he forgot the hundred and one cares of his parish, and was the life of the party. His comical anecdotes, told in the raciest way imaginable, drew forth shouts of laughter from the listeners, and, feeling convinced that Donovan did not often exercise his lungs in that way, he kept up an almost ceaseless flow of the very wittiest talk. A great love of fun and a certain absence of conventional decorum proved the nationality of the Osmonds, but it was with something far beyond the sense of good fellowship that Donovan went home that night; he was cheered and amused certainly, but the home-like reception at the clergyman's house had already widened him and softened his clerical antipathies, while his growing admiration for Charles Osmond did him a world of good.

Who does not know the absolute delight of

intercourse with a greater mind, the enthusiasm which springs from the mere fact of looking up to another, the inspiriting sense of being bettered, raised, stimulated to fresh exertion?

Cut off by his act of self-sacrifice from the Tremain household, and with poor old Rouge Frewin for his sole companion, Donovan was in great need of friends whom he could revere as well as love; the Osmonds were exactly fitted to meet his need, and perhaps for that reason the friendship deepened and strengthened very rapidly,

After he had left that evening the father and son lingered over the fire, indulging a little in that general habit of discussing the departed guest.

"Wasn't it rare to hear him laugh?" said Brian. "I'd no idea he'd such a lot of fun in him. His hatred of the clergy will die a natural death now that he has got to know you! It was the biggest joke to see the way in which every now and then he chanced to notice your tie, and received a sort of shock realising that you actually were one of the hated class."

"It is hardly to be wondered at," said Charles Osmond. "We clergy are terribly apt to forget that we must follow St. Paul, and try to be 'all things to all men.' I should like to know how many parsons have said so much as a kind

word to that fellow, who must have been nominally under the charge of some one all his life. Our beautiful parochial system is fearfully apt to degenerate into a mere skeleton."

"What do you think? will he come round? or will he always be an agnostic?"

"I cannot tell," said Charles Osmond, with a sigh, "he seems to be living with all his might up to the light he has, but he is not the sort of man to change rapidly, and his private history is all against it. An atheist shamefully wronged by those who call themselves Christians cannot but feel that he has a strong case against Christianity."

"But he will never rest satisfied with what he has got," said Brian. "His very face tells that he knows he is incomplete."

"Yes, he knows that," said Charles Osmond. "In talking to him to-night I couldn't help thinking of Browning's description of the grand old ship dismasted and storm-battered, but still bearing on, with something in her infinite possibilities which raised her above the mere lifeboats,

"Make perfect your good ship as these,  
And what were her performances!"

"And yet you doubt whether he will be perfected?" said Brian.

"Never!" exclaimed Charles Osmond, warm-

ly. "I never said so! That he will be the grand character he was meant to be I have not a doubt, but whether he will be anything but an agnostic in *this* world God only knows."

No more was said. Brian fell to thinking of all the contradictory statements about the Eternities, his father returned to the almost ceaseless intercession which was the under-current of his exceedingly practical life. Highly illogical, according to Raeburn, and a great mistake according to others, as most of the intercessions were for those whom a righteously indignant Christian once denounced as "*past praying for*"! But to him it was a necessity of life; one of the world's sin-bearers, he would long ago have sunk under the burden if he had tried to bear it alone. As it was, how *could* he be intolerant, how *could* he be uncharitable? For were not the nineteenth century "publicans and sinners" among the strongest of his bonds of union with the Unseen? He was one of those who cannot help caring more for the lost sheep than for the ninety and nine in the fold, and though he was by no means inclined weakly to condone sin, or to make light of it, no one had ever heard him denounce a sinner, or speak a harsh word of any whom society had condemned.

## CHAPTER XI.

## CONTRASTED LOVERS.

What we love perfectly, for its own sake  
 We love, and not our own, being ready thus  
 Whate'er self-sacrifice is ask'd to make ;  
 That which is best for it is best for us.

R. SOUTHEY.

STEPHEN CAUSTON did not return to the hospital till March. Coming home one afternoon, Donovan found the sitting-room in some confusion, scraps of newspaper and dilapidated note-books scattered about here and there, and a yawning space in the book-shelves which Stephen's books had hitherto occupied.

"Hullo ! has Causton been in ?" he asked old Rouge, who, with a somewhat disturbed air, was sitting over the fire with his long clay pipe.

"I don't know if that's his name," replied the old captain, in an offended tone, "but a tallow-faced, bumptious lad has been here making no end of dust and noise, carrying off your books, too, for aught I know."

"No, no, they were his own," said Donovan, laughing. "But tell me about him, captain. Did he ask for me? did he leave no message?"

"Not he," said Rouge, angrily. "He walked in as coolly as if the place belonged to him, rowed the landlady for not having his things ready packed, and pitched the books into a carpet bag as if they were so many pebbles. Then, facing round on me without so much as lifting his hat, he said, 'I suppose you are a friend of Farrant's?' There was a sneer in his voice, and my blood got up as I said I had the honour to be your friend, and that it was an honour the best in the land might covet."

Donovan laughed prodigiously. Rouge continued,

"At that he sneered again, and said, 'You needn't preach about his virtues; I know a little more about him than you do.' 'Indeed!' said I, hotly; 'then I wonder the knowledge hasn't improved your manners.' 'I might return the compliment,' he said. 'But of course living with a knave like Farrant is enough to contaminate anyone.' At that, milord, I sprang up and thundered at him. I wasn't going to sit still and hear you libelled, and, if you'll believe it, the coward turned as white as a sheet when I challenged him."

"By Jove!" said Donovan. "You don't mean

you really did? His mother will never get over it."

"He won't come poking his nose in here again in a hurry," said Rouge, with satisfaction. "He skulked off at double quick time, muttering that duelling days were over."

"Well, I agree with him there," said Donovan, "though it was good of you all the same, captain, to stand up for me as you did."

"As if I could help it," said old Rouge, with tears in his eyes. "It's not likely I should let that scamp have his say out without putting in my word. I flatter myself he has heard more home truths to-day than in all his priggish young life before. How does he come to hate you so, milord?"

"He has done a shabby thing by me," said Donovan, "and that's the surest way in the world to make him hate me. But we won't rake it all up again; he can't do us any good, and he's already done me all the harm he can."

But, though he would not speak any more of Stephen, the thought of him would not be banished. He had come straight from Porthkerran, might have told him something of Gladys, might possibly have brought him one of the unanswerable letters from Mrs. Tremain or the doctor, or at least a message. And then he could not help wondering at the extraordi-



nary malice of his gratuitous insults. Had his weak and distorted mind really worked itself into the belief that *he* was the wronged one? What account would reach Porthkerran of his stormy interview with the old captain? Something tremendous might, without much difficulty, be twisted and squeezed out of the truth. Here was another case demanding Charles Osmond's ideal forgiveness. But he was nearer forgiving Stephen than Ellis, because he had a great deal of pity for him; besides, the consciousness that he might have cleared himself by exposing Stephen was in itself of a more softening nature than the terribly irritating sense that Ellis had him very unjustly in his power.

Brian Osmond did not fail to notice that Caus-ton, who had been formerly Donovan's companion, now cut him entirely. When he had heard the true explanation, his righteous indignation was pleasant to see. He came constantly to York Road for the sake of reading with Donovan, and before long had become really fond of the poor old captain, while Waif and Sweepstakes, with their touching devotion to their respective masters, added a sort of picturesqueness to that curiously-assorted group. In the summer vacation Brian persuaded Donovan to take a real holiday. The two years of unbroken work added to his private troubles were be-

ginning to tell on him; he looked worn and fagged, but brightened up at the suggestion of taking a walking-tour with his friend. They set off together in August, had a glorious tramp through Derbyshire and the West Riding of Yorkshire, roughing it to an enjoyable extent, and both coming back to town all the better for their outing, and as inseparable in their friendship as David and Jonathan.

It was not, however, until late in the autumn that Brian learnt even the existence of Gladys.

One November evening his well-known knock at the house in York Road roused old Rouge from his after-dinner nap. Donovan, who was stretched at full length on the hearthrug, was so entirely absorbed in some of the abstruse speculations which now very often occupied him that he heard nothing, and did not stir till Brian was fairly in the room.

"Hullo! doing the *dolce far niente* for once," he said, laughing. "Who would have thought of catching you away from the books?"

"Comes from the effects of Yorkshire air," said Donovan, getting up and stretching himself. But the real fact was that he was beginning now to dare to allow himself brief intervals of rest, his thoughts did not wander so hopelessly to Porthkerran, his work instinctively slackened a little, he worked as well—perhaps better—

but less furiously, and without the sense that relaxation was, above all things, to be distrusted and avoided.

"I've got a spare ticket for Gale's lecture at St. James's Hall," said Brian, "will you come with me?"

"Who's Gale? I never heard of him."

"What, you a teetotaler and never heard of Gale! why, he's the great champion of temperance, and a first-rate speaker."

"Better take the captain," said Donovan, half in earnest as he glanced round at the sofa; but Rouge had already fallen asleep again. "It would be no good, I'm afraid."

"Poor old fellow," said Brian, "has he had another outbreak?"

"Yes," replied Donovan, "and his brain is too fuddled now to take in anything; it would be no use taking him, he'd only be asleep in two minutes. I somehow make an awful failure of keeping other folk in order."

"Rather an unmanageable couple, yours," said Brian, "I wonder what Gale would say to a case like the captain's."

"Incurable," said Donovan. "He means well, but his power of will has gone. I used to think he might conquer it, but the more I see of him the more I doubt it. I can do nothing for him except help to make his remorse keener

each time, for he thinks his outbreaks are a personal injury to me; and then we have any amount of maudlin tears and good resolutions never to do it again—till the next time.”

He sighed.

“Poor old fellow,” said Brian, “you were never meant to have such an old man of the sea tacked on to you. I like to fancy the different mortal you’ll be by-and-by when you settle down with your ideal wife, home, and practice.”

“Ideal humbug!” exclaimed Donovan, with a short laugh, in which there lurked more pain than merriment. “Come on, what time does the Gale begin?”

They walked off arm-in-arm, and were early enough to secure front seats in the balcony close to the platform. Donovan seemed in good spirits, he leant forward with his arms on the crimson velvet rail making comments on the audience below, classifying them into rabid teetotalers, sensible supporters of the cause, and merely fashionable adherents. A sudden exclamation of surprise from Brian put a stop, however, to his ease.

“Why, who would have thought it! there’s Causton in one of the stalls. What could have brought him here? Don’t you see him? To the left there, talking to that pretty girl.”

Donovan looked and saw only too plainly

Stephen and Mrs Causton, and between them Gladys.

Yes, she was there, not a hundred yards from him, her pure, fresh, child-like face not in the least altered ! he remembered an old fancy of his that she was like a blush rose ; she looked very flower-like now in that crowd of London faces. For a minute he watched her quite calmly, then, strong man as he was, a deathly pallor stole over his face, he drew back with an uncontrollable shudder.

"Look here, I must go," he said to Brian, and without further explanation he made his way along the balcony. In another moment he felt sure his eyes must draw hers, there always had been a strange magnetism between them without any conscious willing on his part. It would never do for her to see him, he must leave at once.

Brian, not liking his looks, followed him out of the hall ; he seemed as if he were walking in his sleep, never pausing for an instant, noting nothing, and yet passing all obstacles. At the head of the staircase Brian linked his arm within his, they went down silently into the street. There Donovan seemed to come to himself again, his rigid face relaxed, the strange glassy look left his eyes, and for the first time he realised that he was not alone.

"What, you here, old fellow!" he exclaimed.  
 "Don't let me lose you your lecture."

"All right," said Brian. "I don't care about it. You're in some trouble, Donovan—don't pretend, now, that you're not. Was it that you saw Causton with that girl?"

"In a way, yes—I mean it was the seeing her at all," said Donovan, incoherently. "Come on quick, only let us get out into the open, away from these houses."

"You don't imagine he's in love with her?" said Brian. "Causton's an awfully cold-blooded creature; it's not at all in his line, I should think."

"I don't know," gasped Donovan; "it—it won't make much difference to me."

"Why?" asked Brian, boldly. They were both by nature reserved men, but their friendship was real and strong, and Brian knew intuitively that he had touched the secret spring of Donovan's trouble, and that, unless he could get him to speak of it now, a barrier would always be between them; so he spoke out boldly that monosyllable—"Why?"

"Because," answered Donovan, in a quick, agitated way—"because, years ago, I made up my mind not to see her again. It's impossible—it can't be—I'm a fool to be so shaken just by the sight of her."

"Has she refused you?"

He turned his strangely powerful eyes full on Brian's face at the question, and answered, with a sort of indignation,

"Do you think I am fit to ask Gladys Tremain to be my wife?"

There was something grand in his humility. Brian could only mentally ejaculate, "You splendid fellow! you're fit to ask a queen among women." But he was carried away by his enthusiasm, and he could not but own that there was truth in Donovan's next speech.

"It could never be—there could be no real union between us. It's all very well in the way of friendship; you and I can rub up against each other's differences without any hurt, but when it comes to anything nearer, it doesn't do. I've tried, and it's torture—torture that I'll *never* bring to her."

"Is Causton her cousin?"

"No, but a two generations' friend."

"I should dearly like to give him a piece of my mind," said Brian. "However, of course she'll have nothing to say to such a fellow."

"There are times when I could wish she would," said Donovan, hoarsely. "Not now, though—not just now."

"My dear fellow, that's rather too strong," said Brian. "Even I, a mere stranger, can see that she's miles above him."

"Of course," said Donovan; "but it might save her from worse pain."

"Well, if Miss Tremain knows you, and has any idea that you care for her, her face must belie her strangely if she could turn to a fellow like Causton."

"She does not know I love her—at least, I hope not."

"You old brick of a Roman! I can quite fancy how you would hide it all."

There was a silence after that. They had reached the Embankment, and Donovan seemed to lose the sense of oppression, and to breathe freely again. Presently he turned to Brian, speaking quite in his natural voice.

"Well, I'm sorry to have lost you your lecture, but I'm not sorry that you know about this, which is more than I could say to anyone else in the world. I must get to work quickly, or the blue devils will get the better of me. Come back too, won't you, and we'll have a grind at Niemeyer."

So they went back to the York Road lodgings together. The old captain was too stupid to notice them, but Waif was unusually demonstrative, and even as he read Brian noticed that Donovan kept his arm round the dog, while Waif tried to put all his devotion into the soft warm tongue with which he licked his master's



hand. Trouble had an odd way of drawing those two together.

Brian went home that night with much questioning going on in his mind. He honoured Donovan for his conduct, and yet regretted very much that he should be thus cut off from one who must have had so much influence over him. He could not help seeing the matter from his friend's side, whereas Donovan thought only how it would affect Gladys.

Little indeed did Gladys think, as she sat in the crowded hall, that she was so near Donovan. Though she was actually thinking of him, it never occurred to her that he might be there. Instead she was recollecting some of their discussions at Porthkerran on this temperance question, and recalling his stories of the old captain who had nursed him in his illness, and had with great devotedness managed to keep really sober at Monaco, in case "the Frenchmen" should poison his patient!

She was not very happy just now, poor child. They had fancied that she needed change of air, and Mrs. Causton had been charmed to have her at Richmond for a few weeks, in the same little villa which they had rented four years ago. But the change did her more harm than good, for the Causton atmosphere was oppressive, and the consciousness

that Stephen was in the way of seeing Donovan every day, added to the impossibility of hearing anything about him, was almost more than she could endure. She found herself losing self-control, and drifting into more constant thoughts of Donovan than she considered right; nor were her feminine occupations so helpful in the difficult mental battle as his mind-engrossing studies.

As they went home that night from John Gale's lecture, it chanced that for the first time since her arrival Donovan's name was mentioned.

"What a pity you could not have done good for evil," sighed Mrs. Causton, "and induced that poor drunkard who challenged you in the spring to come to this lecture. I fear there is no chance that Donovan Farrant would take him to hear such a man."

"I should rather think not," said Stephen, unpleasantly.

"Oh! but he is a great temperance advocate," said Gladys, thankful that in the darkness her burning cheeks could not be noticed.

"He *was*, my dear," said Mrs. Causton, markedly, "but you must remember he is greatly changed since you knew him, and he is living with a most disreputable companion."

Her heart beat so indignantly at this that she

felt almost choked, but seeing that she was losing her opportunity she quieted herself with an effort, and asked gravely, but quite naturally,

"Donovan is still at the hospital, I suppose? Do you see anything of him now?"

"I see him," said Stephen, "but of course we're not on speaking terms."

"It is much better that you should have nothing more to do with him," said Mrs. Caus-ton solemnly, and she added a text which seemed to her appropriate, but which drove Gladys into a white hot passion—dumb perforce.

All this time she was far too much absorbed to notice an impending danger. The days dragged on slowly, she cared for the visits, picture-galleries, and concerts only in so far as they brought her into closer proximity with St. Thomas's. However angry she might be with herself at night for having allowed her thoughts too much liberty, the following day always found her with the same unexpressed but unquenchable longing. Nothing but the heart-sickness brought by that long-deferred hope could have blinded her to the fact that Stephen's half boyish admiration was re-awaking, that his attentions were disagreeable and obtrusive, that he was as much in love with her as it was pos-

sible for such a man to be. But, as it was, she noticed nothing, she only wearied intensely of the long evenings, when Stephen tried to enliven them, and of the long mornings when she was alone with Mrs. Causton; of the two she disliked the evenings least, but merely because there was a chance of hearing the one name she cared to hear.

It came upon her like a thunderclap at last. One Saturday morning she was sitting in the little drawing-room, writing to her mother, when Stephen, who had no lectures that day, sauntered into the room. He began an aimless conversation, she was a little cross, for it seemed as if he might go on for ever, and she wanted to write. After enduring half an hour of it she grew impatient.

"Let me finish this, Stephen, or it will be too late for the post," she said. "We are to go out after lunch, you know."

"You grudge me the one free morning I have," said Stephen, reproachfully, "but listen to me a minute longer, Gladys, for days I have been waiting to find an opportunity of speaking to you. I think you must have seen that I love you, that all I care for is to please you, will you say that you will try to love me?—won't you try, dear?"

In spite of Gladys' surprise and dismay she

had hard work to suppress a smile, a wicked sprite seemed to chant in her ear the refrain of the song in "Alice in Wonderland,"

"Will you, won't you, will you, won't you, will you join the dance."

She found herself going on with the parody in a sort of dream, instead of giving Stephen his answer.

He was far on in a second and more vehement statement of his case before she fully recovered her senses; then at once the true womanly unselfish Gladys hastened to check him.

"Hush, Stephen," she said, quietly, but with a touch of dignity in her tone. "Please do not say any more of this. I am very, very sorry if you have misunderstood me in any way, we are such old friends, you see; but indeed it could never be as you wish—never."

"You don't know what you are saying," he cried. "You are ruining all my life, all my happiness. Surely you won't be so utterly cruel? I will wait any length of time, if only you will think it over—if only you will try to love me."

"If I waited fifty years, it would make no difference," said Gladys. "I can never love you, never, *never*. Don't think me unkind to speak so plainly. It is better to be true than to let you have false hopes."

"Then you love some one else," said Stephen, in a voice in which despair and malice were strangely mingled, "That is what makes you so positive, so merciless."

Gladys' eyes flashed.

"I might well be angry with you, Stephen, for daring to say that, but since you wish it I will tell you quite plainly why I cannot love you in the way you wish. The man I love must be true and strong, faithful to his friends, and merciful to his enemies, he must be so noble and self-denying that I shall be able to look up to him as my head—my lord—as naturally in the lesser degree as I look to Christ in the greater."

"If you set up an ideal character like that, of course I've no chance," said Stephen, with a very crestfallen air.

"It is not I who set it up," said Gladys, a little impatiently. "Have you forgotten what St. Paul said? Oh! Stephen, I don't want to vex you more than I need, but indeed, indeed you must not speak of this again."

"It is all very well to talk about not vexing me, but you are taking away every hope I have," said Stephen, petulantly. "You girls will never learn how much you have in your power. With you to help me, I might perhaps grow better, become the paragon of perfection you wish, but if you turn away from me——"

He paused. It did not strike Gladys just at that minute what a strange manner of making love it was, but her clear common sense showed her that to yield to such an argument—even had it been possible—would have been exceedingly foolish.

"You may be right, Stephen," she answered. "Perhaps we have more in our power than we know, but I don't think it ever can be right for a woman to marry one whom she cannot look up to. You and I have been friends—old play-fellows—for years, but, though of course I wish still to be your friend, I can't say that I very much respect you. Don't think I want you to be a paragon of perfection, but after last autumn I don't think you can expect——"

He interrupted her.

"It is cruel to bring up past mistakes against me."

"I don't wish to, but I am afraid, till you can think of them as something deeper than mistakes, you will yourself often remind us of them. How can you really forsake them till you are really sorry?"

"You are very hard on me," said Stephen. "You forget what excuse I had; you forget that I was left alone with Donovan Farrant, that he led me into temptation."

He hardly knew what he was saying, for he

was very desperate in his intense selfishness, but he had just enough shame left to flush a little as the untruth passed his lips.

Gladys' eyes seemed to search him through and through. There was a moment's silence. Then, with a little quiver of indignation in her voice, she said, gravely,

"You are telling a lie, Stephen, and you know it."

He did not attempt to exculpate himself, he was too thoroughly abashed. When he looked up again in a minute or two he found that she had left the room.

Mrs. Causton was too genuinely good a woman to resent Gladys' refusal of her son, but at the same time it was such a bitter disappointment to her that it was impossible she should be quite just and kind to her visitor.

"You see, my dear," she kept urging, as she sat beside the sofa in Gladys' bed-room, "though you may be quite right to refuse dear Stephen, yet, humanly speaking, you did seem so exactly fitted to make the real helpmeet for him."

Gladys was by no means selfish, but she did not think it either right or necessary to sacrifice herself so entirely on the altar of the well-being of Mrs. Causton's only son, she could only repeat that she was very sorry, but it was quite impossible, and entreat Mrs. Causton to let her go home at once. However, it was too late to



think of going down to Cornwall that day, and the next day was Sunday, so she had time enough to be exceedingly miserable, and to long unspeakably for her mother before the happy moment of her departure arrived. She was so much relieved to be away from the Caustons that she could have sung from mere lightness of heart when her train had actually started, but Mrs. Causton had put her in charge of an elderly lady, so she had to discuss the weather, and make herself agreeable instead.

That night in her mother's room she forgot all her trouble, however, in the delicious peacefulness which seemed always to come in those evening talks. And as they sat hand in hand in their own particular nook on the old-fashioned sofa, Mrs. Tremain gradually won from Gladys not only the history of her visit to the Caustons, but much that had never passed her lips before. Her mother had long ago guessed what was the secret of her trouble; she had said nothing because she thought silence the best cure; but now—*being* her mother—she knew that the time for speaking had come, and very wisely and tenderly she met Gladys' shy confidence half way. Then, when all was told, she sat thinking for a minute or two in silence, while Gladys nestled more closely to her, too tired to think at all, but tracing in an aimless

sort of way the ivy-pattern chintz of the well-known sofa cover.

"I think, little girl, that the truth of it is this," said Mrs. Tremain at last, "I think you had a good deal of influence with Donovan, you were almost the first woman he had known well, and you were a good deal thrown together. For the present he has passed away out of our lives, you know how sorry I am for it, it is quite his own doing; but whether the separation is for ever or not, I think you may have this comfort, that whatever in your love was true and unselfish will not be wasted, but will always last. I do not think it very likely that he will come here again, and even if he did you would perhaps find it all quite different and have a cold waking from your dream."

"Then ought I not to think of him?"

"I think you should not allow yourself to believe that he is in love with you. No woman has a right to think that till a man has actually asked her to be his wife. Put away the selfish side of the question altogether, but don't make yourself miserable by trying to kill the spiritual part of it. However much you have been mistaken there was most likely a bit of the real truth in your love; don't be afraid of keeping that, no one need be ashamed of the pure, spiritual, endless side of love, and I should

be sorry to think that Donovan should be defrauded of it; you may do more for him even now, Gladys, than you think."

"If we could only find out the truth," sighed Gladys. "I am sure Stephen has somehow misled us."

"I would not worry about that," replied Mrs. Tremain. "You can't sift that matter to the bottom, and I don't think it is very good for you to dwell upon it. Only be quite sure of this, that the more pure and unselfish and trustful you try to become the better you will be able to help him, even if you never see him again. The side of love you must cultivate does not depend upon sight, or time, or place. Have I been too hard on you, little one? Does it seem very difficult?"

"It is always hard to be good," said Gladys, with the child-like look in her face which had first awakened Donovan's love; "but I will try, and you will help me, mother. I'm so glad you know."

In another hour she was sleeping as peacefully as little Nesta; but her mother had a very wakeful night, thinking over the future of her child, and grieving over Donovan's defection.

## CHAPTER XII.

“LAME DOGS OVER STILES.”

We cannot kindle when we will  
 The fire which in the heart resides ;  
 The spirit bloweth and is still,  
 In mystery our soul abides.  
     But tasks in hours of insight will'd  
     Can be through hours of gloom fulfill'd.

With aching hands and bleeding feet  
 We dig and heap, lay stone on stone ;  
 We bear the burden and the heat  
 Of the long day, and wish 't were done.  
     Not till the hours of light return,  
     All we have built do we discern.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

“THERE’S been a scrap of a child here asking for you,” said the old captain to Donovan, as they returned to their rooms one evening after dining at a restaurant. “I couldn’t make out what she wanted, but she’s been here twice to see if you weren’t come home.”

“What sort of child?”

"Oh! a shabby-looking little lass. She wouldn't tell me what she wanted with you, only she must see Mr. Farrant, and when would he be in."

"She'll turn up again, I suppose," said Donovan. "I'm pretty free this evening; shall we do those slides?"

Old Rouge had lately developed a most satisfactory love for the microscope, and whenever it was possible Donovan asked his help over it, or awakened his interest in some new specimen to be seen. There were now actually three things in the world besides himself and his toddy which the old captain cared for—Donovan, Sweepstakes, and the microscope. He loved them all exceedingly in his odd way, and, on the whole, the year which he had spent in York Road was almost the happiest year of his life.

They were hard at work with their slides, specimens, and Canada balsam when the door-bell rang and the mysterious "child" was announced.

"Show her in here," said Donovan to the landlady.

"Indeed, sir, she ain't fit," returned the woman. "It's a-pouring with rain, and she be that wet and dirty."

Donovan frowned the frown of a Republican, deposited his section of the brain of a gorilla in a safe place, and went out into the passage. The smallest little white-faced child imaginable stood on the mat; the rain had soaked her, the water dripped down from her dark hair, from her ragged shawl, from her indescribably-draggled skirt; she looked the picture of misery.

"Come in and dry yourself by the fire," said Donovan, and the small elf, too frightened to refuse, followed him into the sitting-room. The old captain bowed to her as gallantly as if she had been a princess, Waif sniffed at her wet frock and yielded up his place in front of the fender, Donovan drew a stool for her on to the hearthrug, and the elf sat down and instinctively spread out her frozen fingers to the blaze.

"You wanted to see me?" asked Donovan.  
"What was it about?"

"Please it was father, sir."

"What is your father's name?"

"Smith, sir, and please he's very ill with something in his inside, and he wants to see you."

"But I'm not a doctor; he must get the parish doctor."

"Oh! please, it isn't for his inside he wants you," said the elf, looking frightened.

"What does he want?"

"Please I don't know, but he said I was to ask Mr. Farrant to come."

"But I don't know your father; he's not been at St. Thomas's, has he?"

"No, sir, but please do come, for he'll be dreadful vexed if you don't," and her eyes filled with tears.

"Don't cry," said Donovan, "I'll come with you. Is it far? You must show me the way."

They set off together, Donovan taking the elf under his umbrella to her unspeakable pride and delight, and Waif soberly trotting at their heels.

"And how did your father know where I lived, do you think?" he asked, as they crossed Westminster Bridge.

"Please he had it all wrote down on a card, and he can read very well indeed, father can."

Big Ben struck nine, and therewith a recollection awoke in Donovan's mind, a fierce struggle which he had once had just on that spot, a sight of Stephen passing by, a hurried pursuit to a well-known billiard-saloon, and a strange recognition of a Cornish face. He had written his address on a card, of course! He remembered it perfectly well now. This must be a message from Trevethan's son.

The elf did not speak again, but led him

down Horseferry Road into one of the most horrible of the Westminster slums. He took the precaution of picking up Waif and carrying him under his arm ; he was his only valuable. They were unmolested, however, and the child, turning into a forlorn-looking house, led the way up a steep and dirty staircase, and turning a door-handle showed Donovan into a perfectly dark room redolent of tobacco.

"Here's the gentleman, father ; give us a light," she said, groping her way in.

A match was struck, and Donovan could see by the fitful light a comfortless-looking room, and in the corner a man propped up in bed with a short pipe in his hand. The elf produced a tallow candle, Donovan drew near to the bed, and at once recognised the billiard-marker.

"I thought the message was from you ; I'm glad you've sent for me at last," he said.

"I thought it was too late," said the man, "and then when the child found you out, I thought it was that you wouldn't come. Sit down ;" he pointed to a chair, then went on speaking in the most absolutely free and easy tone. "I'm dying, or next door to it, so I thought I'd like to hear of the old man down at Porthkerran. He asked you to look out for me, did he ?"

"It was his greatest wish to find you," said



Donovan. "And after you sent him that five-pound note he told me about you, said he thought you must be in London, and having very little idea of the sort of place London is, he asked me to look for you. You are like him; I recognised you at once that night."

"No flattery to the poor old man to say I'm like him," said Trevethan, with a laugh. "This one is like him, though; come here, little one, are you wet? it rains, don't it?"

He drew the child towards him, touching her ragged dress with his thin white hands.

"The gentleman made me dry it by the fire, and he held his umbrella over me as we comed back," said the elf.

"Thank you, sir," said Trevethan, a softened expression playing about his cynical mouth. "She's a bit of the real Cornish in her, though London smoke has nearly spoilt it. There, run away and get your supper, Gladys."

Donovan started and coloured.

"Yes, 'tis a queer name for the likes of her," observed Trevethan, scanning Donovan's face curiously with his keen blue eyes. "But I made up my mind the little one should have at least one good honest name, though may be Miss Gladys wouldn't be best pleased to have her name given to such a poor little brat."

"Oh! yes, she would be very glad to see that you remembered Porthkerran and still cared for it," said Donovan. "But it's a pity to let the poor child grow up here when your father would be only too glad to have her."

"That's what I wanted you for," said Trevethan. "Would he be kind to her? is he too strait-laced to take in my poor little lass? Some of those religionists are hard as nails, and I want my little lass to be happy."

"He would be very good to her," said Donovan, without hesitation. "Your father is one of the best men I know."

"Odd that he should have such a son, isn't it?" said Trevethan, trying to laugh.

"Happily the least deserving of us do often have good fathers," said Donovan, rather huskily.

Then he listened to the history of the blacksmith's son, a very sad history, which need not be written here. The man was now evidently very ill, not at all fit to be left alone with no better nurse than his child, but he had fought against the idea of being moved to a hospital because he could not endure the thought of leaving little Gladys alone, or of having her sent to the workhouse. Donovan offered to pay her expenses down to Porthkerran, but even that seemed intolerable to the poor man,

as long as he lived he could not make up his mind to part with her. Nor would he let Donovan write to his father.

"Not now. Don't write now," he urged, "it would only make the old man miserable, wait till I'm either dead or better. Do you think there's a chance of my getting better? I should like to make a fresh start."

"There would be a very good chance for you if you would go to a hospital, you cannot be properly nursed here. Think over it, and I will see whether I can't find some one in London who would look after your child."

"If she could come to see me," said Trevethan, wistfully.

So Donovan left, promising to look in again the next evening and talk things over.

There was evidently no time to be lost, he thought the matter over as he walked home, and suddenly arriving at a possible solution of the difficulty, he turned into the station instead of going on to York Road, took a ticket to Gower Street, and was soon making his way to the Osmonds.

Charles Osmond was at church, but Brian and Mrs. Osmond were at home, and were quite ready to hear the story of the sick man.

"Another *protégé* for you," said Brian, laughing, "and of course a ne'er-do-weel."

"Birds of a feather flock together," said Donovan, smiling. "We've a natural affinity, you see. The great difficulty is about the child, I don't know what's to be done with her."

"We might get her into some home," said Mrs. Osmond. "I know one or two where she would be happy."

"But she wouldn't be allowed to go and see her father," said Donovan. "And it would never do to separate them, the child is the great hope for him."

"What child is the great hope, and for whom?" said Charles Osmond, coming into the room with his peculiarly soft slow step. "Do I actually hear you, Donovan, discussing such things as men and children, I thought you were up to the eyes in work for the exam?"

Donovan told his story.

"You see," he added, at the close. "From any school or home she would never be allowed to come out and go to the hospital."

"What's the child's name?"

"Gladys." Then as Brian looked greatly surprised and Charles Osmond made an exclamation, he continued,—"Trevethan comes from Porthkerran, and Miss Tremain is worshipped down there; she is the tutelary saint of the place—and he called his child after her."

"Well, I think Gladys had better come to

this home," said Charles Osmond. "What do you say, mother—will Mrs. Maloney make the kitchen too hot to hold her?"

"Oh, no, she is much too good-natured."

"But you don't realise, I'm afraid," said Donovan. "She's the most neglected-looking little thing altogether, dirty and unkempt, and too young to be of any use to you."

"She must be an odd child if we don't find her of use," said Charles Osmond, with a strange smile in his eyes. "Why, I thought, Donovan, you were one who believed in the influence of children."

"For those who want it, yes," said Donovan. "But——"

"But we *don't* want it, and are to be left to ourselves—is that it?"

"She's scarcely fit to come here," said Donovan; "she's ragged and dirty to a degree."

"Oh, you soul of cleanliness!" said Charles Osmond, laughing. "Is there not water in the land of Bloomsbury?—can we not scrub this blackamoor white? And as to raggedness, it will be odd if with four women in the house—all of them longing to be Dorcases—we can't clothe one poor little elf. Can you get your man admitted to St. Thomas's?"

"I think so."

"Very well, then, as soon as he is moved

we will be ready to have the little girl."

Donovan went home with the words ringing in his ears, "A stranger and ye took me in." And instinctively his thoughts travelled back to a certain summer day years ago, when, with muddy, travel-stained clothes, he too had been taken into a home, ill and penniless and utterly ignorant of that strange love which had been revealed to him. He feared it was against the rules of political economy, and quite against all worldly wisdom; but however that might be, such living Christianity had a strange power of touching his heart.

It seemed to touch Trevethan's heart too; evidently kindness to the child was the way to get hold of him. For attention to himself he was not particularly grateful, grumbled at the prospect of losing his pipe at the hospital, swore fearfully if, in helping him to move, Donovan caused him any pain, and was so surly and off-hand in manner that, had his attendant been a believer in class and caste, he could hardly have borne it patiently.

Every evening for the next week he went to that dismal room in Westminster; it was thankless work, and yet Trevethan was very fond of him, and would hardly have dragged through the wretched days without the hope of those nightly visits. He was far too sullen and

miserable and ashamed to let this appear, however, and made it seem rather a favour to admit his visitor. At the end of the week he was able to be moved to St. Thomas's, and on the afternoon of the same day Donovan took little Gladys to the Osmonds.

When he got back to his rooms he found, to his intense surprise, that instead of old Rouge's well-known figure sitting over the fire, there was a lady in the arm-chair, well-dressed, quite at her ease, apparently engrossed in a newspaper. He made a sort of inarticulate exclamation, upon which she turned hastily round.

It was Adela.

"My dear Augustus Cæsar, how delightful to see you again!" she exclaimed, holding out both her hands. "Were you very much astonished to see an unknown female in possession of your fire-side?"

"How good of you to come and look me up!" said Donovan, really pleased to see her, for she was the first of his family whom he had met for years.

"Good!" exclaimed Adela, in her old bantering tone—"why, I've been longing to come ever since I knew your whereabouts—ever since that good Cornishman came and enlightened me at Oakdene. But there's been a conspiracy among the fates against me! if you'll believe it,

I've hardly been in town since that time. I've been half over the world since I saw you last—Italy, Austria, Greece, Switzerland—in fact, the grand tour; but as to getting a day in town unmolested by friends or dressmakers, in which to visit you, I assure you it's been as unattainable as the moon."

Donovan, a good deal amused by this thoroughly characteristic speech, brought a footstool for his cousin, poked the fire, rang the bell for tea, and finally settled himself on the opposite side of the fireplace.

"We will be comfortable, and you shall talk just as you did in the old times," he said. "I declare it makes me feel quite inclined to turn misanthropical again for the sake of one of the old arguments."

"There, I was right, then. You have actually renounced it all and become a philanthropist! To tell you the truth, the immediate cause of my visit was this: I happened to be in the Underground this afternoon, and imagine my feelings when, on the platform at Gower Street, I caught sight of my misanthropical cousin pioneering a little City Arab through the crowd. My curiosity was so intense that I was really obliged to come and solve the problem at once. Besides, it was tantalising to see you so near, and to have my frantic signals disregarded.



You are immensely altered, Donovan ; I almost wonder now that I knew you."

She looked at him attentively for a minute, as if trying to find out in what the great change consisted.

"It is a long time since we met," said Donovan ; "I should think it rather odd if I were not changed."

"You have had a hard life, I'm afraid," said Adela. "You know, of course, how vexed I am about Ellis's conduct ; he ought to have made you a proper allowance. I said all I could to him, but that brother of mine is terribly like a mule ; when once he has made up his mind to dislike a person, nothing will change his opinion."

"We won't discuss him," said Donovan, afraid that inadvertently he might reveal to Adela the real depth of her brother's treachery. "Tell me instead about my mother ; it is more than a year since I had any news of her."

"She is well, I think," said Adela, in a doubtful voice ; "but, to tell you the truth, I have been very little at Oakdene. Whether Ellis has any idea that I act as a medium between you and your mother, I don't know, but he makes it unbearably uncomfortable for me. I oughtn't to say it to you, I suppose, but I must confess that that marriage seems to me to have been a

fearful mistake. Ellis is not half as jolly as in his poor bachelor days; he has all that heart can wish or money buy, and yet every time I go to stay with them he seems to me more depressed and irritable and dissatisfied with things."

"Does he manage the estate well?"

"Oh! he leaves it all to the bailiff; he knows nothing whatever about it, moons about all day with his cigar, scolding anyone who dares to interrupt him."

"Are they coming up for the season?"

"No, he has let the Connaught Square house till July; but they think of spending next winter either there or abroad, for your mother fancies the Manor damp, and she has certainly had a good deal of rheumatism lately. That is absolutely all I know about them. Now let us talk of something more cheerful; haven't you got some nice, wicked medical student stories for me? You are a dreadful lot, are you not? Now amuse me a little, there's a good boy, for, to tell you the truth, I'm dying of *ennui* in this most prosaic of worlds."

"We are very prosaic here," said Donovan, smiling, "nothing, I fear, to re-vivify you except ponderous works on anatomy and medicine. Come, you shall be my first patient; in less than a year you will perhaps see the family

name on a brass plate, not a useless brass in a church, but a most utilitarian plate on a surgery door."

"You dreadful boy, what made you take up such a trade?"

"Take care how you speak of my profession," said Donovan, laughing. "I'll prescribe the most horrible remedies for your *ennui* if you are not respectful. I chose it because it's to my mind the only really satisfactory profession."

"If you had any interest in the medical world, and were likely to get a good West End practice; but otherwise, just think of the sort of people it will throw you among. You'll have to go among poverty and dirt and everything that's disagreeable. Besides, you will lose caste."

"You forget that I don't believe I have any to lose," said Donovan, smiling. "You should turn Republican, it saves so many small annoyances."

"What were you doing this afternoon with that beggar-child?"

"Taking her to some friends of mine who have promised to house her while her father is in the hospital."

Adela lifted up her hands in horror.

"Taking that child to a gentleman's house, my dear boy—what an odd set you must have

got into ! That sort of thing sounds very nice, but it's dreadfully extravagant and romantic."

"It has a way of seeming very practical to the one who is taken in," said Donovan, in a voice which revealed a good deal to Adela.

"You are thinking of your good Cornishman," she exclaimed. "But you were a more eligible subject than that little beggar-girl, more fit to be in a gentleman's house."

"Much you know about it!" said Donovan, with a half smile, and again Adela realised that the five years which had passed so uneventfully with her, had brought to her cousin a knowledge both of evil and good quite beyond her understanding.

"I tried my misanthropical creed for some time," he continued after a minute's pause, "and found it a dead failure. And then I had the good fortune to come across some people who lived exactly on the opposite system."

"From extreme to extreme, of course," said Adela, "that is always the way. I suppose you've become a Wesleyan or a Methodist."

He could not help smiling a little at her tone, and at her fashionable horror of dissent, but his grave answer brought back to her the remembrance that even in the old days he never could endure to have matters of religious belief or unbelief lightly touched upon.

"I do not see my way to Christianity at all as yet."

"And you don't go to church?" said Adela, regretfully. It had always been the one great thing she had urged upon him.

"Not quite in the way you would approve of," replied Donovan, smiling, "but I do go in for the sermon now and then at my friend's church. I am afraid you would think his teaching of the 'extravagant and romantic' order, he has a habit of bringing Christianity to bear on every-day life in rather a difficult and inconvenient way."

Adela looked thoughtful.

"He is right, of course," she said, sadly; "but I don't think people know how hard it is when one is a great deal in society. I can't adopt beggar children or teach in Sunday schools, it's not in my line."

She spoke so much more seriously than usual that Donovan's heart went out to her.

"I sometimes think," he said, "that in its way Dot's life was about the most perfect one can fancy. It seemed such a matter of course that she should be the patient, loving little thing she was, that at the time it didn't strike one. But just think of it now, with everything to make her selfish she was always the first to think of other people, with scarcely a day of her

life free from pain she was always the one bit of sunshine in the house. And yet she was as unconscious of it as if she had been a baby. Depend upon it it's not the teaching in Sunday schools or the adopting of children that makes the difference, the spirit of love can be brought into any kind of life. What had Dot to do with philanthropy and good works? Yet if it had not been for that little child's life I should have been a downright fiend long ago. I don't believe you women know how much you can do for us, not by your district-visittings and conventionalities, but by just being the pure beings you were meant to be."

Adela was silent. She knew she had talked a great deal of nonsense in her life, had flirted with innumerable men, had flattered dozens of foolish young fellows whom in her heart she had all the time despised. She felt truly enough that her influence must all have gone into the wrong scale, and that while meaning harmlessly to amuse herself, she had all the time been lowering that standard of womanhood of which Donovan seemed to think so much.

"And yet you know," she said, piteously, "if you subtracted the vein of fun and banter and chaff from me there would be nothing left but a dull old spinster beginning to turn grey, whom you would all wish to get rid of. I'm like poor

little Miss Moucher, volatile I was born, and volatile I shall die."

"We can ill afford to lose any of the real fun in the world," said Donovan. "I hope you won't turn puritanical. I don't think I could like a person who had no sense of humour, so please don't talk of subtracting yours."

"I suppose the real fun, as you call it, is good," said Adela. "And the artificial non-sense is bad. At the same time it is hard to get up anything but forced fun when life is a long bit of *ennui*."

"But you have the secret for making life something very different," said Donovan.

"I believe you envy me!" said Adela; "but, oh! my dear Donovan, it is quite possible to have prescriptions, and medicines, and a doctor within reach, and yet to be very ill and miserable."

"It seems then that we are both in a bad way," said Donovan, smiling. "You know the remedies, but have not will enough to use them. I have the will to use them, but have not the remedies."

"Well, what is to help us?" said Adela.

"Go to some one better fitted to tell you," replied Donovan. "This is a good sort of working motto, though."

He opened Kingsley's life, which was lying

on the table, and pointed to the following lines :

“ Do the work that's nearest,  
Though it's dull at whiles,  
Helping, when you meet them,  
Lame dogs over stiles.”

“ I'll be your ‘lame dog’ for this afternoon, and you shall grace this bachelor room and pour out tea for us. By-the-by, talking of bachelors, how is old Mr. Hayes? it is an age since I heard of him.”

They drifted off into talk about Oakdene and Greyshot neighbours, feeling that they had touched upon deeper matters than they cared to discuss.



## CHAPTER XIII.

## OF EVOLUTION, AND A NINETEENTH CENTURY FOE.

Say not the struggle nought availeth,  
 The labour and the wounds are vain,  
 The enemy faints not, nor faileth,  
 And as things have been they remain.

For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,  
 Seem here no painful inch to gain,  
 Far back, through creeks and inlets making,  
 Comes silent, flooding in, the main.

And not by eastern windows only,  
 When daylight comes, comes in the light,  
 In front the sun climbs slow, how slowly,  
 But westward look, the land is light."

A. H. CLOUGH.

LATE in the afternoon of a sunny August day two pedestrians might have been seen skirting the shore of one of the beautiful little lakes which lie cradled in the arms of the grand old monarch of Welsh mountains. The elder, grey-bearded and somewhat bent, had yet an air of alertness, a certain elasticity of

step which bespoke a buoyant temperament; the younger, lacking entirely this touch of triumph, walked firmly and sharply, following in his companion's wake, and himself closely followed by a fox-terrier. Very still was the mountain side, for miles round not another living creature was in sight; above them to the right towered the most abrupt side of Snowdon, rugged and wild and grim-looking, its chaos of grey rocks relieved here and there by tufts of coarse mountain grass or clumps of fern; to the left, in striking contrast, lay the little lake, small and insignificant enough to be scarcely known by its name, and yet in the beauty of its situation and in its majesty of calmness attracting the eye almost as much as its stately bearer.

"There's a stiffish climb before us," said Charles Osmond, pausing as he looked up the mountain path. "What do you say to an hour's rest here? we couldn't have a lovelier place."

"Very well, and Waif shall have a swim," replied Donovan, "I'll just give him a stone or two. We have plenty of time if we're to see the sunset from the top."

Whistling to the dog, he ran down the slope to the lake, while Waif, in a tremor of delighted excitement, plunged into the cool water after the sticks and stones which his master

threw. Charles Osmond, stretched out on the grass with one of the grey boulders by way of a pillow, watched the two thoughtfully, the spirited swimming of the fox-terrier, the fine strongly-made figure of the man hurling the stones into the lake with a vigour and directness and force which—albeit there was no mark—bespoke him a good marksman. After a time he made his way again up the slope, and threw himself down at full length beside his companion with a sigh of comfortable content.

“You old Italian!” said Charles Osmond, with a laugh, “what a way you have of throwing yourself in an instant into exactly the most comfortable position! now a true-born Britisher fidgets, and wriggles, and grumbles, and in the end does not look as if he’d found the right place.”

“One of the bequests of my great-great-grandmother,” said Donovan, “by nature I do go straight out on the hearthrug when other fellows would crouch up in an arm-chair.”

“Oh! it is four generations back, is it! I staked my reputation as an observer that you had a bit of the Italian in you the very first time we met, though Brian scouted the idea.”

“It comes out in that and in the way I owned to you before,” said Donovan, “the endlessness of the feud when once begun. We’ve some

bloodthirsty proverbs as to enemies in Italy."

"I shouldn't have thought you revengeful by nature."

"It smoulders, and does not often show itself in flame," said Donovan. "I'm afraid there have often been times when I could have done something desperate to Ellis Farrant if I'd had a chance. Even now, professing to go by very different rules, I believe if I saw him fall into that lake, the fiend of revenge in me would try hard to hold me still on the shore. Good folk may shudder, but that's the plain unvarnished truth. I have shocked even you, though, by the confession."

"No," said Charles Osmond, slowly, "you've only surprised me a little. Having come to such blanks in yourself and your system, I wonder rather that the fitness of Christianity to fill those blanks does not seem more striking. The lesson of forgiveness, for instance, could only have been taught by Christ—by the great Forgiver. I wonder that your need does not throw more light on Christianity."

"Proof," sighed Donovan. "It is that we want."

He thought of his talks with Dr. Tremain as the words passed his lips, but though the doctor's argument was still fresh in his mind, he had by no means come yet to think that

logical proof could be willingly renounced.

"But the sense of need *is* an indirect proof," said Charles Osmond.

"I cannot see it in that way," said Donovan. "That a man in a desert is dying of thirst is no proof that there is water in the place."

"No; but it *is* a proof that the natural place for man is not the said desert, and that the water he longs for does exist, that it is his natural means of life, and that without it he will certainly die."

"It is not much good to talk by metaphors," said Donovan, "and, since we have broken the ice, I should very much like to ask you one or two questions in plainest English. It is all very well to speak of need and thirst and the rest of it, but there are gigantic difficulties in the way. I should like very much to know, for instance, how you get over the evolution theory."

"You speak as if it were a wall," said Charles Osmond, laughing a little. "I never thought of 'getting over it.' To my mind, it is one of the most beautiful of the 'ladders set up to Heaven from earth,' and if folks hadn't been scared by the conglomeration of narrow-minded fearfulness and atheistical cock-crowings, the probabilities are that more would have seen the real beauty and grandeur of the idea."

"I noticed Hæckel's 'Creation' and 'Evolu-

tion of Man ' in your book-shelves the very first night I came to you," said Donovan; "and I've always wondered how you did get over it."

"There you are again, making my ladder a wall," said Charles Osmond, with a little twinkle in his deep, bright eyes.

"Well, it *is* a wall to me," said Donovan. "Having all come into existence so exceedingly well without a God——"

"And," interrupted Charles Osmond, "finding it so hard to live without Him, being so conscious of a grave deficiency in our nature which yet nature does not give us the means to supply. In honesty, you must remember that you've previously admitted that."

"Yes, but surely you see the difficulty," said Donovan, with a touch of impatience in his tone.

"I do," said Charles Osmond, gravely, "that is, I think I see where your difficulty is. For myself, as I told you, the theory of evolution seems to me in absolute harmony with all that I know or can conceive of God. I accept it fully as His plan for the world, or rather, perhaps I should say, as an imperfect glimpse of the beauty of His plan, the best and clearest that present science can give us. In another hundred years we may know much more."

"But you cannot make Hæckel square with the Bible."

"I certainly do not accept all Hæckel's conclusions, for they are often drawn from premises which are utterly illogical; nor do I accept all his assumptions, for he often practically claims omniscience. At the same time, he has done us a great service, and the false deductions of a teacher cannot spoil or alter the truth of his system. If it were so, it would be a bad look out for Christianity, with its two hundred and odd sects. Do you consider that spontaneous generation is already proved?"

"Not absolutely," said Donovan, "but quite sufficiently for working purposes, and in time I can't doubt that it will be completely proved. What will then become of the Author of the Universe, to adopt the current phrase?"

"If it should be proved, as I fully expect it will be," replied Charles Osmond, "it will merely carry us one step further back in our appreciation of the original Will-power. We shall still recognise the one Mind impressing one final and all-embracing law upon what we call matter and force, and then leaving force and matter to elaborate the performance of that law."

"You assume a good deal there," said Donovan. "Why should we imagine that law—still less, a personal Will—existed before the existence of primordial cells?"

"You must either assume that there existed

only one primordial cell, or else that there was a law of order impressed upon the infinite number of primordial cells," said Charles Osmond.

Donovan left off twisting the grasses which grew beside him, and knitted his brows in thought. This idea was a new one to him. He was silent for a minute or two, then, keeping his judgment entirely suspended, he said, slowly,

"And what then? I should like to hear that borne out a little."

"The question is, how has the absolute uniformity of action been attained? If matter be self-existent, there must have been at the very first outset an infinite number of cells, and also an infinite possibility of variation. Say, just for illustration, a million cells, each capable of varying in a million ways. Now just calculate the mathematical chances that ultimate order *could* result from this disorder, and, if so, what length of time, approximately, it would occupy, allowing each cell an hour of existence, and then to give birth to another cell, probably *differing* from itself!"

Donovan laughed a little, and mused, and presently Charles Osmond continued.

"No, it seems to me that orderly transmission of hereditary form or habit is only possible on the supposition either of the one self-



existent cell, to which there are many objections, or on the supposition of a law of order, which must have been antecedent to the cells, or it could not have impressed them."

"I daresay many would willingly concede as much as that," said Donovan. "It is only when you go on to assert that the law came from a law-giver that we cry out."

"Well, where did it come from?" said Charles Osmond.

"I suppose it was a fortuitous concourse of atoms," said Donovan, doubtfully.

"That is a thoroughly unscientific hypothesis," returned Charles Osmond. "Mind, I don't assert that my theory is *proved*, but I claim this, that both physical and mathematical science demonstrate the probability of some law existing before primordial cells existed, and that this probability is at least as reasonable as a working hypothesis, as is that of evolution in explaining the *method* in which that primordial law has operated."

"But what will my old 'soul-preserving' friends say to you?" observed Donovan, smiling. "'You agree to the disenthronement of that all-important being—man.'"

"Do I?" said Charles Osmond.

"Well, you accept as your oldest ancestor something more insignificant than an amoeba."

"Yes, but I thought the longer the pedigree the better," said Charles Osmond, with laughter in his eyes.

"But, seriously, where do you make your spirit-world begin?"

"I think," said Charles Osmond, "there was once a wise man, but who he was I haven't an idea, and this was his wise utterance, 'The spirit sleeps in the stone, dreams in the animal, and wakes in man.' The revelation, or, if you will, the awakening, appeared to be sudden, it came as it were in a flash; but it was the result of long processes, it followed the universal rule—a gradual advance, then a sudden unfolding. And in this way, I take it, *all* revelation comes."

Donovan looked full into his companion's face for a moment, a question, and a very eager one, was trembling on his lips, his whole face was a question, *the* question which Charles Osmond would fain have answered if he could. But a reserved man does not easily talk of that which affects him most nearly, and in this case certainly out of the abundance of the heart the mouth did not speak. The firm yet sensitive lips were closed again, but perhaps the very silence revealed more to Charles Osmond than any spoken words could have done, and by a hundred other slight indications he knew per-

fectly well that Donovan's heart was full of the spirit hunger.

"Let me just for a minute fall back on the Mosaic account," he said, after a little time had passed. "You think that account incompatible with the evolution theory, to my mind it expresses in a simple, clear way, such as a wise teacher might use with young children, the very truths that recent researches have wonderfully enlarged upon. If you will notice it carefully the very order given to the creation in the first of Genesis is exactly borne out by modern science. Then we are told in the grand old simple words which only were fit for such a purpose—that God breathed into him, and man became a living soul. To man evolved probably from the simplest of organisms, to gradually perfected man the revelation is made: God breathes into him the breath of life, that is the knowledge of Himself, life according to Christ's definition *being* knowledge of God. Man was now fully alive, fully awake, the spirit had slept, had dreamed, but the revelation was made, and his dormant spirit sprang into life."

"But I am not conscious of this spirit," said Donovan, "I am aware of nothing that cannot be explained as a function of the brain, thought, mind, will."

"Yet you are conscious of being incomplete,"

said Charles Osmond. "It seems to me that for a time we get on very well as body and soul men, or body and mind, if you like it better; but sooner or later comes the craving for something higher, which something, I take it, is the spirit life. And one thing more, if you will let me say it, you tell me you are conscious of nothing but body and mind, but I can't help thinking that your love for that little sister whom you mentioned to me was the purest spiritual love, to which no scientific theory will apply."

For many minutes Donovan did not speak, not because he was actually thinking of his companion's words, but because a vision of the past was with him; little Dot in her purity, her child-like trust, her clinging devotion rose once more before him. How had she learnt the truths which to him were so unattainable? Brought up for years in a way which could not possibly bias her mind, how was it that she had, apparently without the least difficulty, taken hold of such an abstraction, such a mysterious, incomprehensible idea? She had not believed on "authority," for naturally the nurse-maid's authority would have weighed less with her than his own, yet in some way the Unseen, the Unknown, the to him Unknowable, had become to her the most intense reality.

She had very rarely spoken to him on that subject because she knew it grieved him; he could only remember one instance in which she had definitely expressed the reality of her faith. He had been remonstrating with her a little, and she had answered in a half-timid way which somehow angered him because it was so unusual with her.

"You see, Dono, I can't help knowing that God is, because He is nearer to me even than you."

He could almost feel the little face nestling closer to him as the shy words were ended, and clearly could he recall the terrible pang which that faltering childish sentence had caused him. He had then believed that she was under a great delusion, now he inclined to think that her pure soul had grasped a great truth which still remained to him utterly unknowable. This was almost all that he had actually heard her say, except the last half unconscious prayer, the speech of a little child to its father containing no pompous title, no ascriptions of praise, but only the most absolute trust. She had never fallen into conventional religious phraseology; but perhaps nothing could have so exactly met Donovan's wants that summer afternoon as her last perfectly peaceful words, "He is so very good, you know—you will

know." No argument, however subtle, no sermon, however eloquent, had the hope-giving power which lay in the little child's words—words which had lain dormant in his heart for years, apparently with no effect whatever.

Charles Osmond saw that his reference had awakened a long train of thought; he would not look at the changes on the face of his companion, for just now in its naturalness it was exceedingly like a book, and a book which he felt it hardly fair to read. Instead he gazed across the quiet little lake to the sunny landscape beyond, battled with a conceited thought which had arisen within him, and was ready with his beautiful, honest mind and hearty sympathy to come back to Donovan's standpoint as soon as he seemed to wish it.

Waif, having studied the group from a distance for some minutes, and having given himself a series of severe shakings to wring the water from his coat, seemed to consider himself dry enough for society. He came back to his master, sniffed at his clothes, and finding that his remonstrating whines received no notice, began to lick his face. Then Donovan came back to the world of realities, and perhaps because of the softening influence of the past vision, perhaps merely out of gratitude to the dumb friend who understood his moods so well

and filled so great a blank for him, he threw his arms round the dog, wet as he was, hugged him, patted him, praised and petted him in a way which put the fox-terrier into his seventh heaven of happiness.

Charles Osmond was touched and amused by the manner in which the silence was ended. Presently Donovan turned towards him again with a much brightened face.

"There is one thing which you Christians will have to face before long," he began, "or rather I should think must face now, with the theory of evolution so nearly established."

"Well?" said Charles Osmond.

"I mean this," continued Donovan: "Our original ancestors and their living representatives can hardly be left out of your scheme of immortality. It seems to me a very half-and-half scheme if it only includes mankind. You know," he added, laughing a little, "even the idea of heaven you gave us in your sermon the other night—about the least material and the most beautiful I ever heard—would scarcely be perfect to me without Waif."

"I quite agree with you," said Charles Osmond. "Nor can I understand why people object so much to the idea. Luther, you know, fully admitted his belief that animals might share in the hereafter, and to appeal to

a still higher authority it seems to me that, unless we deliberately narrow the meaning of the words, St. Paul clearly asserts the deliverance of the *whole creation* from the bondage of corruption into the deliverance of the glory of the children of God. I believe in One who fills all things, by whom all things consist, therefore I certainly do believe in the immortality of animals."

"Well, seeing how infinitely more loving my dog is than most men, I own that it seems to me unfair to shut him out of your scheme. The old Norsemen walked with their dogs in the 'Happy Hunting Fields,' and, however material that old legend, there is a touch of beauty in it which is somehow wanting—at any rate, to dog-lovers—in the ordinary, and I must say equally material, descriptions of the gorgeous halls of Zion."

"You two are very fond of each other," said Charles Osmond, looking at the dog and his master.

"We have been through a good deal together, and I believe, to begin with, the mere fact of his wanting me when no one else did, of his following me so persistently in the Strand just at the time when everyone had hard words to throw at me, drew me towards him. I've watched him nearly dying with distemper, and



somehow dragged him through. He has watched me nearly dying in a bog, and, by his sense and persistency, got me rescued. Besides that, at least three times he has saved me from a worse death, just by being what he is, the most loving little brute in England."

"Brave little Waif! I shall never forget my first sight of him," said Charles Osmond, smiling. "It was a wonder you two didn't put me out that night, the fit was distracting enough; but when I saw you and the fox-terrier walking up the aisle, head No. 1 nearly went into space, though I could have told the people every one of your characteristic features, and should have known Waif among a thousand dogs!"

"But to go back once more to our old subject," said Donovan; "does not your theory bring you to something very like Pantheism?"

"I think it *is* the Higher Pantheism," said Charles Osmond. "While we've been lying here, Tennyson's lines have been haunting me. You know them, I suppose?"

Donovan only knew one poem in the world, however, and he asked to hear this one. Charles Osmond repeated it, and, because he loved it, rendered it very well.

"You see," he said, after a pause, "it is this Higher Pantheism which leads us up to the greatest heights."

‘Speak to Him thou, for He hears and Spirit with Spirit  
can meet,  
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet.’

It leads us to no vague impersonal Force, but to the Spirit by whom and in whom we live and move and have our being.”

Donovan did not speak, and before long they began to climb their mountain ; but, though he said no word to his companion, he moved to a sort of soundless tune which set itself to a verse of the poem,

“Dark is the world to thee : thyself art the reason why ;  
For is He not all but thou, that hast power to feel ‘I am I’?”

The climb was rather a stiff one, and by the time they reached the summit they were glad enough of the fresh breeze which was there to greet them as they made their way up to the little cairn. The sun was within a quarter of an hour of setting, its red beams were bathing the landscape in a flood of glory ; around the mountains stood in solemn grandeur, as if doing homage to the parting king, the red beams lighted up one or two, but more were in solemn shade, varying from pearly grey to the softest purple. There was something perfectly indescribable in the sense of breadth and height and beauty combined ; in their different ways the two pedestrians revelled in it. The creases seemed to smooth themselves out of Charles

Osmond's brow, he lost the weight of care which the long year's work brought, not always to be shaken off in the summer holiday. But here it was impossible to be earth-bound; his whole being was echoing the words,

"Are not these, oh! soul, the vision of Him who reigns?"

And Donovan, exulting in that sense of space which was so dear to him, realised as he had never realised before that it is the Infinite only which can satisfy the Infinite.

The lofty is often closely followed by the prosaic, and in the neighbourhood of great heights there lurk the dangers of the precipice. Donovan had reached high ground, but in a minute came the most violent re-action, the most humiliating fall.

They were not the only tourists who had made the ascent that afternoon. A very different party sat drinking and smoking on the other side of one of the huts; their laughter was borne across every now and then to the westward side of the cairn, but both Charles Osmond and Donovan were too much absorbed in their own thoughts to be at all disturbed by it. The rudeness of the shock was therefore quite unbroken. From high but unfortunately fruitless aspirations, Donovan was recalled to the hardest of facts by a sudden shadow arising between

him and the sun. A dark and rather good-looking man stood on the very edge of the rock looking at the sky, very possibly not seeing it much, but looking at it just for want of something better to do. Charles Osmond glanced at him, then, as if struck by some curious resemblance, he turned towards his companion, and at once knew that the stranger could be none other than Ellis Farrant, for Donovan's face bore a look of such fearful struggle as in his life of half a century the clergyman had never before seen.

Before long Ellis turned, and finding himself face to face with the man he had so shamefully wronged, had the grace to flush deeply. But in a minute he recovered himself, and assumed the *rôle* of the easy-mannered gentleman, which he knew so well how to play.

"Why, Donovan!" he exclaimed. "Who would have thought of meeting you up here? Pity your mother's not with me, but I'm only here for a week's fishing with Mackinnon."

The struggle had apparently ceased, Donovan had set his face like a flint, but his eyes flashed fire, and as he drew himself up and folded his arms, at the same time making a backward movement in order to be as far from Ellis as the narrow platform would admit, he was certainly a formidable-looking foe. There was no doubt

whatever as to his sentiments; he might have stood for a model of one of the old Romans righteously hating his enemy. Ellis shrank beneath his glance, but it somehow made him malicious.

"You must remember Mackinnon," he continued, in his bland voice. "He was with us, if you recollect, on the night of that unfortunate dance, when poor little——"

He broke off, for Donovan, with the look of a man goaded beyond bearing, bent forward, and with the extraordinary vehemence which contrasted so strangely with his usually repressed manner, thundered rather than spoke the words, "Be silent."

Being a cowardly man, Ellis did not feel disposed to stay in the neighbourhood of his foe; he not only obeyed the injunction but disappeared from the scene as quickly as possible.

Donovan once more leant back against the cairn with folded arms, and for many minutes did not stir. Charles Osmond did not venture to speak to him; in perfect silence the two stood watching the setting sun, which was now like a golden-red globe on the horizon line. Many hundreds of times had the sun gone down on Donovan's wrath, and this evening proved no exception to the rule. By the time the last red rim had disappeared, however, all traces of

agitation had passed from him, and he turned to his companion a quiet, cold face, observing, in the most matter-of-fact tone,

“We must be making our way home, I suppose.”

“Certainly, if we’re to eat the captain’s trout for supper,” said Charles Osmond.

And without further remark they began the descent, Donovan showing traces of latent irritation in the headlong way in which he plunged down the steep path. Charles Osmond, following much more slowly, found him beside the little lake where they had rested in the afternoon; perhaps the place or some recollection of their talk had softened him, at any rate, he was quite himself again. Charles Osmond put his arm within his, and they walked on steadily down the less abrupt part of the mountain to Pen-y-pass, and along the Capel Currig road to Bettws-y-Coed.

Presently Donovan broke the silence.

“Well, you have seen Ellis Farrant at last. Odd that he should have turned up just after we had been talking of him. I hope you were satisfied with my Christian forbearance.”

Charles Osmond was silent, not quite liking his tone.

“I have offended you,” said Donovan. “I will take away the adjective.”

"I daresay your forbearance was very great," said Charles Osmond, "and your provocation far greater than I can understand, but you must forgive me for saying that I saw nothing Christian in it."

"What did you see?" asked Donovan, a little amused.

"I saw a perfect example of the way in which a nineteenth century gentleman hates his enemy, the hatred of the ancients kept in check by the power of modern civilization."

"And how would you have had me meet him?" cried Donovan. "Did you expect a stage reconciliation, while he is still defrauding me? Did you wish me to embrace him and wish him good speed?"

"I wished you to act as I think Christ would have acted," said Charles Osmond, quietly.

"Oh! once more I tell you this idealism is impossible!" exclaimed Donovan, impatiently. "I am but a mortal man, and cannot help hating this fellow."

"You see in copying Him whom I consider to be *more* than mortal man, we do realise our own short-comings," said Charles Osmond.

"Well, what do you imagine Christ would have done in such a case?"

"I think you can answer that question for yourself," said Charles Osmond. "But to put

it on what to me is a lower footing, consider how the best man you ever knew would have acted, and then carry his conduct still further. Your father, for instance—how would he have treated an enemy?"

Unconsciously Charles Osmond had touched on Donovan's tenderest part. He fell into a reverie, and they walked a mile before he spoke again.

"I believe you are right," he said at last; and there was something of pathos in the words coming from one so strong and so exceedingly slow to own himself conquered. "I'm afraid up there on the mountain I've fallen when I might have risen."

"I daresay you will have another opportunity given you," said Charles Osmond, by way of consolation.

"Don't be in too great a hurry," said Donovan, smiling. "I'm afraid I can't honestly wish for it yet."

Then they fell to talking of every-day matters, and late in the evening they reached the cottage where they were spending a few weeks—a somewhat curious quartette—the Osmonds, father and son, old Rouge Frewin, and Donovan. The captain was supremely happy; went out fishing every day, and partly from his love to Donovan and his desire to do him credit,



partly from his awe of a "parson out of the pulpit," really managed to keep sober through the whole of their stay in Wales. But perhaps no one got quite so much from the Welsh holiday as Donovan himself. He went back to work with both body and mind invigorated, having learnt more in that month's intercourse with Charles Osmond than he would have learnt in years of solitary life.

There now remained only a few months of his medical course. Then "the world was all before him." He had not as yet formed any plans, but as the autumn advanced public events pointed the way for him, and he found his vocation.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## DUTY'S CALL.

Faith shares the future's promise ; love's  
 Self-offering is a triumph won ;  
 And each good thought or action moves  
 The dark world nearer to the sun.

Then faint not, falter not, nor plead  
 Thy weakness ; truth itself is strong ;  
 The lion's strength, the eagle's speed,  
 Are not alone vouchsafed to wrong.

Thy nature, which through fire and flood,  
 To place or gain finds out its way,  
 Has power to seek the highest good,  
 And duty's holiest call obey !"

WHITTIER.

ENGLAND was just at this time engaged in a contest of which Donovan very strongly disapproved, but perhaps his political views only increased the desire which had arisen within him to go out as assistant-surgeon to the seat of war. The belief that many hundreds of Englishmen were being sacrificed in an unjust cause could not fail to rouse such a lover of

justice, and he lost no time in making arrangements with an ambulance society which was sending out help, and was in want of assistants. Charles Osmond, on the whole, approved of his choice, though regretting very much that he should for some time lose sight of him ; but he felt that the life of action would be quite in Donovan's line, and that the entire change of scene would be good for him. Brian would have been only too glad to join him, but his work was already cut out for him in London, where he was to take the place of junior partner to an uncle of his who had a large practice in the Bloomsbury district.

It so chanced that Stephen Causton, who had been hindered both by illness and idleness, went in for his final examination at the same time. All three passed successfully. The autumn had been a very busy one, but Donovan was well and in good spirits, eager to begin his fresh life, and too much engrossed with the present and future to let the past weigh upon him. Still, as one January day he went in to St. Thomas's to take leave of Trevethan, not even his strong will could prevent a few very sad thoughts arising as he spoke of Porthkerran and the Tre-mains. Trevethan's recovery had been very slow, but he was now really well, and it had been arranged that he should go down to Porth-

kerran with his little girl the following week. His illness, and the kindness he had met with, had softened him very much, and though his manner was still brusque in the extreme, no one who really knew the man could have doubted his gratitude. In his odd fashion he half worshipped Donovan, and it was really from the desire to please him that he had overcome his shame and reluctance, and written to ask his father to receive him again. The blacksmith's intense happiness was so evident from the ill-spelt but warmly expressed reply, that Trevethan the younger began to feel drawn to him, and to look forward to his return with less apprehension and more eagerness.

Having left him directions as to fetching little Gladys from the Osmonds, Donovan took leave of him and went home to make his final preparations, a trifle saddened by the conversation. But after all, he reasoned with himself, he had more cause for rejoicing, for he had certainly been of use to one of the Porthkerran villagers, and Gladys would be heartily pleased to hear old Trevethan's good news. To have helped even indirectly to please her was something to be thankful for ; besides, had he not renounced the thought of personal happiness as such ? had he not chosen the way of sacrifice and willed to find his happiness in serving his

fellow-men? And then once more he returned with all his former eagerness to the anticipation of his coming work, work which bid fair to call out all his faculties, and which made his pulses beat quicker even to think of, for perhaps no one but an awakened misanthropist can feel with such keenness the delights of the enthusiasm of humanity.

His key was in the latch when the sound of a carriage stopping at the door made him glance round; to his utter astonishment he saw his mother. He hurried forward, surprise and not unnatural emotion in his look and manner.

"Why, mother! this is very good of you," he exclaimed, helping her to alight.

"My dear Donovan!" she said, in a hurried nervous voice, "let me come in to your rooms for a minute, I am in dreadful trouble."

He brought her into the little sitting-room and made her sit down by the fire, perplexed by her agitation. It was many years since they had met, and time had altered Mrs. Farrant, she looked worn and faded; there was something piteous in the alteration. Donovan bent down and kissed the once beautiful face with a sort of reverence which he had never felt before.

"How did you get leave to come to me?" he asked.

Then Mrs. Farrant's tears began to flow.

"Oh! the most terrible thing has happened," she said, vainly trying to check her sobs. "Ellis, your cousin, has been unwell for some days, and this morning the doctor declares that he has small-pox, and if you will believe it, I have actually been in his room the whole time! they said I had better leave for Oakdene, but I am so unnerved, so shaken, I thought you would take me to the station and arrange things. I thought I should like to see you and tell you. Oh! Donovan, do you think I shall take it? do you think it is infectious at the beginning?"

It was the same selfish nature, the same incapability of thinking of the well-being of others, which had caused Donovan so much pain all through his life. His mother was, after all, only altered externally. The hard look of his childhood came back into his face.

"Then you mean to go to Oakdene and leave your husband?" he asked, with a severity in his voice which he could not disguise.

"Don't be hard on me," she sobbed, "I have such a horror of this; if it were fever I would have stayed, but small-pox! No, no, it is impossible, I must go, I must indeed. Besides, I am not strong enough to nurse him. The doctor will send a trained nurse. Indeed! you

must not urge me to go back, Donovan, it would kill me."

Her agony of distress made him reproach himself for having spoken so strongly; he paced the room in silence. It was unnatural of her to leave her husband, but yet there was truth in her words, she would be absolutely useless as a nurse, and her nervous terror would very likely render her liable to infection. Besides, what right had he to judge her? He could not trust himself to discuss the right and wrong of the question, he felt that he must leave it to her own conscience, and when he spoke it was merely to ask details of Ellis's state, and the doctor's opinion of it.

"You had better rest here for a little time," he said, when she had answered his questions in her unsatisfactory way. "It must have been a great shock to you!" He spoke in a very different tone now, and Mrs. Farrant, feeling all the comfort of having a stronger will to repose upon, allowed herself to be made comfortable on the sofa, and lay silently watching her son's movements with a sort of interested curiosity, like a placid patient watching the preparations of a dentist, or a sleepy child following with its eyes the nurse as she sets the room in order for the night. Her son was very much altered; he still set about everything in the same quiet

methodical way, but his angles had been rounded off, and the bitter cynicism which had always alarmed and repulsed her seemed quite gone. He had taken paper and ink and was writing hurriedly; presently he pushed his chair back from the table, and folding the written sheet, came towards her.

"I am just going to the hospital, and then to the telegraph-office with this," he said. "I have ordered Mrs. Doery to have everything ready for you. Presently I think you must let me vaccinate you. It is something new to have a doctor in the family, isn't it?"

"I'm only so shocked that you should have been driven to it," sighed Mrs. Farrant. "You should have gone into the army. You have grown so like your father, Donovan."

He bent down once more and kissed her. Then, promising she should not be disturbed, he hurried away with the telegram.

"So like your father!" The words rang in his ears, but never had he felt further from any likeness to the noble, calm, self-governed man whose image stood out so clearly in his memory, the three days' intercourse with the pure mind having left a deeper impress than months and years of intercourse with those of lower type. But just now his mind was in a seething chaos, his whole world shaken,



whether by conflicting duties or conflicting passions he hardly knew, only he feared it was the latter. Rapidly walking along the crowded streets he tried to fight the battle out, mechanically taking off his hat to an acquaintance, mechanically going through his business as people must do even when the deadliest mental conflict is raging, even when—perhaps unknown to them—the decision for good or evil, for life or death is hanging in the balance. Previous arrangement and strong inclination drew him almost irresistibly towards the fulfilment of his engagement to the ambulance. Of course other men would willingly take his place at a day's notice, but his whole mind was set on going out to the war, the thought of foregoing it was almost unendurable. And yet a perverse voice within him kept urging on him that others might go out to the war, but that he was the only man called to take charge of a poor neglected wretch in a certain West-End Square.

Yet did not the fellow deserve his fate? Donovan would have suddenly changed natures if the justice of the thing had not struck him. Was it not perfectly satisfactory? Here was Nemesis at last—his foe would be justly punished! And then, being exceedingly human, he drew one of those fascinating little mind

pictures which, if delineated by men, are certainly engraved by the devil. In this picture self, the hero, went out to the war, won unheard of honours, received honourable wounds, and then was greeted with the news that his enemy had perished miserably in a luxurious house which he had no right to be in. "So like your father," with the sharpest satire the words again rang in his ears.

God be thanked that the devil's alluring pictures cannot stand side by side with the image of a true, noble, whole-hearted man! God be thanked that the ideal man has lightened the world's darkness!

Donovan's struggle was by no means over by the time he returned to his mother; it raged all the time that he was attending to her, all the time that he talked quiet commonplaces, brought her tea and toast and all that the house would afford, soothed her nervous terrors as to infection, and quoted small-pox statistics.

"Could you not come down with me to Oakdene?" said Mrs. Farrant, suddenly. "You say your course is over, why not come with me now?"

He knew then that the supreme moment had come.

"I will see you safely into the train," he said; "but I can't come to Oakdene."

"Why not?" urged Mrs. Farrant.

There was a minute's silence, then, as quietly as if he had been speaking of an afternoon stroll, Donovan replied,

"Because I'm going round to Connaught Square presently."

Mrs. Farrant stared at him. Perhaps he hardly felt inclined just then for inquiry or argument; muttering some excuse, he left the room, drew a long breath, and walked slowly upstairs.

In his bed-room were all the preparations for the coming journey—travelling gear, books, instruments; he felt a sharp pang as he realised that all his plans were changed—perhaps there was even a slight fear lest his resolution should be shaken, for he began to toss some clothes into a portmanteau in a hurried and unmethodical way quite unnatural to him; but he quieted down as he took Dot's miniature from its place. For a minute he looked at it intently, and afterwards there was no more haste in his manner.

Mrs. Farrant could not resist questioning him when he came downstairs again.

"Do you really think you are wise to go?" she urged. "Why put yourself to such a risk?"

"You forget I am a doctor," he said, smiling a little.

Mrs. Farrant of course knew nothing of her

husband's real treachery, but she knew that he and Donovan were sworn foes, and could not understand her son's resolution.

"But he has a trained nurse," she continued, "and I should have thought that, disliking each other as you do, it would be unlikely that you could do much for him; he may not like to have you there."

"Possibly," said Donovan, "but I must go and see."

"And then you will have been in the way of infection for nothing," urged his mother. "Come, change your mind. Why must you go?"

"Because it is right," said Donovan; and there was something in his tone which kept Mrs. Farrant from further objections.

She looked uneasy and troubled; perhaps for the first time it struck her that there could be an absolute right and wrong in such a question—perhaps she was a little doubtful about her own conduct. It was at any rate with a feeling of relief that she parted with Donovan at the Paddington Station, for people whose consciences are just enough awake to know that they are half asleep never feel comfortable with those who have and obey an imperative conscience.

When the Greyshot train had started, Dono-

van hurried off to make arrangements with the ambulance, to hunt up a substitute, to find the old captain and tell him his change of plans, to write notes, give orders, and make Waif understand the parting. How much he disliked it all, how intensely he shrank from the work before him, he hardly allowed himself time to think.

Late that evening, as Charles Osmond was sitting in his study hard at work over the parish accounts, Brian hurried in, an open letter in his hand.

“Just look here!” he exclaimed, too full of his subject to notice that he interrupted his father half-way up a column. “Would you have believed the fellow could have thrown it all up?”

Charles Osmond held out his hand for the note, and read as follows :—

“DEAR BRIAN,

“After all, I’m not going south. Smithson was only too thankful to step into my shoes, and will sail on Friday. If you can, get him to trade for some of my goodly Babylonish garments, as I can’t well sport them in England. I only saw him for five minutes this afternoon, when we’d other matters to talk

over. Ellis Farrant is down with small-pox, and I'm going to see after him. Look in now and then on Waif and the captain, if you can ; they are in the depths.

"Ever yours,

"D. F."

"My grand old Roman!" exclaimed Charles Osmond, half aloud. "You've grown a good deal since the day we climbed Snowdon."

"But it's such folly to throw up this just at the last moment," said Brian. "Besides, he's fagged with the exam, and now, instead of having the voyage to set him up, he goes straight into this plague-house all for the sake of one wretched man."

"You may be quite sure that Donovan was very certain of the right before he took such a step," said Charles Osmond ; "he's not the sort of fellow to change his mind or his plans lightly, whereas *you*——" He laughed and shrugged his shoulders.

Brian smiled too, for it was the family proverb that he was the most impetuous and impulsive of mortals.

## CHAPTER XV.

## VIA LUCIS.

O Beauty, old yet ever new !  
 Eternal Voice and Inward Word,  
 The Logos of the Greek and Jew,  
 The old sphere music which the Samian heard.  
 Truth which the sage and prophet saw,  
 Long sought without, but found within,  
 The Law of Love beyond all law,  
 The life o'erflooding mortal death and sin !

Shine on us with the light which glowed  
 Upon the trance-bound shepherd's way,  
 Who saw the Darkness overflowed,  
 And drowned by tides of everlasting Day.  
 Shine, light of God !—make broad thy scope  
 To all who sin and suffer ; more  
 And better than we dare to hope  
 With Heaven's compassion make our longings poor !  
 WHITTIER.

IT was evening by the time that Donovan's preparations were ended. About seven o'clock he was set down at the Marble Arch, and hastily made his way to Connaught Square.

As he stood on the steps waiting till the door was opened, the newly-risen moon looked full down on him through the trees in the garden ; the quiet silvery light was not quite in keeping with his state of mind, for the whole afternoon he had, as it were, been rowing against tide, and quietly as he had made his resolution, and steadily as he had gone through with all which it involved, there was no denying that it was sorely against his inclination.

It was certainly a curious position. Here he was, after years of absence, ringing at the door of his own house, not with a view to taking possession, but merely to see and help the unlawful occupant. He could not even to himself explain or understand the line of conduct he was taking, he did not think it particularly just, or at all politic, and there was no doubt that it was exceedingly painful. He was no saint at present, only an honest man walking in the twilight.

He rang at least three times, and was beginning to feel impatient, when at length the door was opened about an inch and some one within asked what he wanted.

"I want to come in, Phoebe," he replied, recognising the voice.

The maid opened the door wider, astonished and some perplexity in her look.



"Oh, Mr. Donovan, sir!" she exclaimed. "How little I thought to see you again! But don't come in, sir, please don't, for we've small-pox in the house."

"I know," said Donovan, "and I'm glad to see that you've not deserted your master, Phoebe; I might have known that you at least would be staunch. We must keep you out of the way of infection, though. Have you been with Mr. Farrant at all?"

"I helped to move him, sir, this morning," said Phoebe.

"Oh! he's up at the top, is he? That's well. Don't you come further than the second floor then, I will fetch everything from there."

"You mean to stay?" said Phoebe, surprised, but evidently relieved.

"I have come to nurse him," said Donovan. "You can make me up a bed in" (with an effort) "Miss Dot's room."

In a few minutes more he was striding upstairs two steps at a time, perhaps moving the quicker because even now a voice within him was urging him to turn back, calling him a fool for his pains.

Since their meeting in Wales he had often wondered whether he should again see Ellis Farrant, and if so how they would meet and where. He had rehearsed possible meetings in

which he might combine perfect coldness with the forgiveness which Charles Osmond had spoken of. Cold Christliness—a curious idea, certainly!

But when it came to the point he somehow lost sight of himself and his wrongs altogether. A dim yellow light pervaded the room, the sick-nurse came to meet him as he opened the door, he gave her a low-toned explanation, then turned to the bed where Ellis Farrant lay.

After all he was a man—a man tossing to and fro in weary misery, racked with pain, scorched by fever, fearfully ill, and fearfully alone, left at least with only paid attendants. He was delirious, but he at once noticed Donovan's entrance, mistaking him, however, for his father. He started up with outstretched hands.

"Ralph! dear old fellow, I knew you'd come," he cried. "Save me from that old hag, it's old Molly the matron; don't you remember her? Stay with me, Ralph; promise! She's a hag, I tell you, a cursed old hag! She's been trying to poison me. Don't leave me with her, don't leave me!"

"I have come to stay with you," said Donovan, touched by the reference to the past, to the school days when his father and Ellis had been the greatest of friends. "I shall stay and nurse you through this; no one shall hurt you."

After the promise had been repeated again and again Ellis grew more quiet.

"There's one other thing," he began, incoherently. "I owe a sovereign to one of the sixth; you'll pay it for me if I die—promise me—the honour of the family, you know—the Farrant honour; his name is—what is his name? I can't remember it! Plagne on the fellow! *Donovan!* That's it. Pay Donovan a sovereign, will you? And there was something else—a paper; what did I do with it? Tell me, for heaven's sake! There were six bits; I could join them. Give them to me, give them, I say; don't burn them, *don't!*" his voice rose to a scream. "Fire! fire! the bits are flying round me. Save me, Ralph! it's that dreadful Donovan, he's pelting me!"

"I'll settle him," said Donovan, quietly. "Don't be afraid."

"But you can't get the paper—it's the paper he wants, and it's burnt. Oh, God! what shall I do? There he is again! he won't speak—his dreadful eyes are looking at me!"

"No, no, you've made a mistake," said Donovan, re-assuringly; "he doesn't want the paper, he wants you to go to sleep. Come, now, you must try to settle off."

With that he laid his hand on Ellis's burning

forehead, and before long had really quieted him; he fell into a sort of doze.

Then Donovan turned to make his peace with the much-maligned nurse, a good-natured old creature in a gorgeous dressing-gown rather painfully suggestive of defunct patients. She was not at all unwilling to share the burden of nursing with the young doctor, and it ended not unnaturally in his taking by far the greatest part. For Ellis remained for several days under the same delusion, and would accept no services from anyone but the supposed cousin and school-fellow.

His ravings were painful enough to listen to, and Donovan saw plainly that his guilt weighed heavily on him. The fatal "paper," with its six fluttering bits, sometimes red-hot, sometimes black and charred, sometimes only freshly torn, recurred constantly in his delirium. The last meeting on Snowdon haunted him too, and Donovan would have given much to be able to blot out the strong impression which his silent wrath had made.

By the time the fever subsided, and the second stage of the illness set in, he had grown so perfectly absorbed in the progress of his patient that all sense of the strangeness of his own position had died away. He had scarcely time to realise that he was in his own house; when

in his brief intervals of rest he was set free from the sick-room, and could emerge from the carbolic-steeped barrier which separated the upper part of the house from the lower, he had no leisure to think of possessions or rights; there were orders to be given, telegrams to be sent; every now and then in the early morning, or after dusk when few passengers were stirring, there was the chance of a breath of air in the park.

But to the sick man the discovery was a great surprise and a very sudden shock. The fever left him, the delirium faded away, and he found that the attendant from whom he hoped everything, the only person he could bear to touch him, and the one in whom he had put the blindest faith, was not his old friend and school-fellow at all, but his enemy—Donovan. He tried in vain to think that this too was a delusion. A hundred horrible fears rushed through his mind; had he come to take his revenge? He dared not say a word, but accepted everything sullenly and silently. At length, after many days, Donovan's persevering care and tenderness began to touch his heart. When the secondary fever set in, his ravings were less of the burning paper, and more of "coals of fire,"—coals which, nevertheless, he could ill have dispensed with.

It was the strangest, saddest, most pitiful sick-bed, and in many ways it was more of a strain to Donovan than the stiffest campaign could have been.

Charles Osmond, coming one evening to inquire after the patient, met Donovan on the doorstep.

"You are not afraid of me?" he inquired. "I've just changed."

"Not a bit," said the clergyman, taking his arm. "Let us have a turn together. Do you think I've been a parson all these years without coming nearer small-pox than this? How is your cousin getting on?"

"Exceedingly well up till this morning," replied Donovan; "the disease has about run its course, but I'm afraid a serious complication has just arisen. There's to be a consultation to-morrow."

"You look rather done up; are you taking care of yourself?"

"Oh! I shall do very well; but between ourselves it has been"—he hesitated for words—"about the saddest business I ever saw, from the very first."

"Do you mean his remorse?"

"Yes, the sort of abject misery of it, and his agony of fear. I wish he had some one else with him, some one who was at least sure in his

own mind one way or the other. If the poor fellow asks me anything, I can tell him absolutely nothing, but that I do not know—that all is unknown and unknowable.”

“I will gladly come to see him,” said Charles Osmond, “if you think he would not object; but”—looking attentively at the singularly pure and noble face of his companion—“I fancy, Donovan, you are helping him better than anyone else could; service from you must be to him what no other service could be.”

“‘Coals of fire,’ according to his own account,” said Donovan, with a little humorous smile playing about his grave lips. “But he does seem to like it nevertheless.”

Their conversation was cut short by a warning clock which reminded Donovan that he must return. Charles Osmond watched him as he walked rapidly up the square, and disappeared into the darkened house, the house in which such a strange bit of life was being lived. *How* those two cog-wheels would work together the clergyman did not feel sure, but he was sure they would in some way work the good. Ay! and that without his interference! He was human enough to long to have his share in helping this soul, honest enough to recognise that another had been called to the work—that other being an agnostic. As he walked down

into the main road a verse from one of his favourite poems rang in his head.

“And nerve his arm, and cheer his heart ;  
Then *stand aside*, and say ‘ God speed !’”

“Standing aside !” the hardest of tasks to a warm-hearted man, very conscious of his own power ! To a surface observer it would surely have seemed right that Charles Osmond and Donovan should change places.

The sick man not being a surface observer, however, but an actor in this life drama, would strongly have objected to such a change. Very slowly and gradually his sullenness had disappeared, and in his heart a strange, helpless, dependent love was growing up—almost the first love he had ever known. He was quite himself now, and could think clearly ; he had already formed his plan, his poor, wretched bit of restitution, and how to carry it out.

When Donovan returned that evening from his walk with Charles Osmond, and took his usual place in the peculiarly oppressive sick-room, he found Ellis much exhausted, his hoarse voice sounded hoarser than usual, his inflamed eyelids were suggestive of voluntary tears, he seemed rather to shrink from Donovan’s gaze.

For in his thin, wasted hand he held tightly the paper which contained his brief confession. With infinite difficulty he kept it out of Dono-



van's sight, with almost childish impatience he waited for the morning, when, before the two doctors, he intended to make his declaration. He was too eager to gain the relief to care very much what they thought of him. Perhaps he half hoped, too, that he could make a sort of compact with Heaven, and by the act of restitution secure a few more years in the world; or perhaps, having lived guilty, he desired to die innocent, or as nearly innocent as might be. Undoubtedly there was a certain amount of selfishness in the action, but there was, too, a very genuine sorrow, and that strange glimmer of love for the man whom he had injured, the enemy who had come to him in his need.

Donovan could not understand why he was so anxious to get rid of him the next day; he humoured him, however, and was not present when the two doctors arrived. After the consultation was over he was too much troubled to think of anything but their verdict. He had known that Ellis's recovery was doubtful, but he was startled and shocked to hear that he could not possibly live more than two or three days. To him, too, was left the task of breaking the news to the patient. Never had he felt more unfitted for his work, never had he so keenly felt his own incompleteness. To make matters worse, Ellis seemed quite suddenly

to have taken the greatest dislike to him.

"I know quite well what you have to say," he interrupted, when Donovan tried to lead up to the doctors' opinion. "I know that I'm dying, and that you'll soon be well rid of me. I tell you I won't have you in the room, get out and leave me to the nurse. Isn't it enough that I had you all last night?"

Till now it had been difficult to be absent even for a few hours from the room, for Ellis had always begged not to be left to the nurse, whom he greatly disliked. This sudden change was perplexing and disappointing. Donovan went away discouraged and wretched, and tried in vain to sleep. Late in the evening he again went to relieve guard. Ellis did not actually object this time to his presence, but he was alternately sullen and irritable, in great pain, and, in spite of his confession signed and witnessed, in terrible mental distress.

Donovan never forgot that night. It seemed endless! There was not very much to be done; to quiet Ellis was impossible, to reason with him was useless; he could only listen to his irritable remarks, and make answer as guardedly as he could.

"What are you here for?" grumbled Ellis  
"What made you come? Why do you stay?  
You know you hate me!"

"Nonsense," replied Donovan. "Should I stay here if I did?"

"You have some evil purpose," cried Ellis. "You have come for your revenge. Why *did* you come?"

"Because it was right," said Donovan, shortly.

"Right! Do you think I shall believe that? All very fine when you knew quite well I'd ruined you. Didn't you know, I say? Didn't you know well enough?"

"Of course," said Donovan. "But you were ill and alone."

"Oh! yes, it's all very fine; but you won't get me to believe it. It's a very likely story, isn't it? I tell you," he added, in a querulous voice, "you're a fool to try to gull me like that—it's against all reason—you can't prove to me that you don't hate me—you can't prove to me that you didn't mean to poison me!"

"No, I can't prove it in words," said Donovan; "I can only flatly deny. But we have been so long together, surely you can believe in me now?"

He still murmured that it was impossible—against reason; but, perhaps exhausted by his own vehemence, fell at length into a sort of restless sleep.

Donovan too dozed for a few minutes in his

chair, only however to carry on the argument. He woke with the words—"Quite against reason" in his mind, and his own answer—"Surely you can believe in me now!"

He got up, went to the bed, and looked at Ellis; he was still sleeping, an expression of great distress on his worn face. Donovan sighed, and crossed the room to the window. The night was wearing on; he drew up the blind and saw that the first faint grey of dawn was stealing over the horizon. Everything looked inexpressibly dreary; the room was at the back of the house; he could see the bare trees waving in the wind, and the grim, white tombstones in the Unitarian burial-ground stood out forlornly in the dim light. Death was certain, all too certain, but the beyond was dark and unknown. Yet here in the very room with him was one who must soon pass through those gloomy portals—to what? Was there a hereafter to complete this fearfully barren existence? Would that wretched life have a chance of growth and change? Or was it just ended here? Had this man, with all his gifts and talents, just wasted his life? Was there no future for him? He had done no good works to live after him, he had left no memory to be revered, he had done no good to his generation, had left nothing for posterity. Was all ended?

When Dot had died, Donovan had dreamed of no possible hereafter, but now all seemed different. His creed was no longer a positive one, and besides, the idea of the wasted life dying out for ever was less tolerable than the idea of the little child passing from terrible pain to the "peace of nothingness."

What *was* the Truth? Did this awfully mysterious life end with what was called Death?

And still a voice repeated his own words—"Surely you can believe in me now!"

Then again he looked at the sleeping man, and again a miserable sense of failure weighed down his heart. He had tried hard to show no trace of remembrance of the past, never in look or word to remind Ellis of the wrong he had done him, yet his forgiveness had been rejected, insolently, contemptuously rejected. He might just as well have gone out to the war and left Ellis to his fate, for he evidently would not even believe that his motive had not been one of self-interest. "Against all reason," a "likely story!" Evidently he could not bring himself to believe, and how was it possible to give him proof! The most wounding sense of rejection and disappointment filled his heart.

And still the voice repeated, "Surely you can believe in me now!"

Then for the first time in his life Donovan

became conscious of a Presence mightier than anything he had ever conceived possible. He realised that his pain about Ellis was but the shadow of the pain which he himself had given to "One better than the best conceivable." He saw that for want of logical proof he too had rejected Him whose ways are above and beyond proof. The veil was lifted, and in the place of the dim Unknown stood One who had loved him with everlasting love, who had drawn him with loving-kindness.

## CHAPTER XVI.

## APPREHENSION.

Life has two ecstatic moments, one when the spirit catches sight of Truth, the other when it recognises a kindred spirit. . . . . Perhaps it is only in the land of Truth that spirits can discern each other; as it is when they are helping each other on, that they may best hope to arrive there.

*Guesses at Truth.*

**I**F rapture means the being carried away, snatched out of self to something higher—if ecstasy means the state in which corporeal consciousness is made to stand aside, to give place to a higher and perfectly satisfying consciousness—then Donovan knew for the first time both rapture and ecstasy. But real spiritual rapture is the quietest thing in the world. It is only when the senses are appealed to that superstition and fanaticism win devotees and evoke noisy and excited zeal. The man who, after long search and hard labour, is at length rewarded by some grand discovery, will be very

calm *because* of his rapture, very still, because his feelings are true and deep.

It was characteristic of him that he stood upright. After a time the beauty of the scene without made itself felt. The sun had just risen—the window looked westward—all the land was bathed in the rosy glow of sunrise. The wind had gone down, the bare trees no longer waved dismally to and fro, the white graves in the burial-ground were softened and mellowed in the glorious flood of light. It was not unlike the change in his own life—the darkness past, the sun changing all the scene. For was not the mystery of life solved? had not even the grave “its sunny side”? It was when the prophet realised the everlastingness of God that the conviction came to him—“we shall not die.”

And Dot's confident “*you will know*” came to pass, and she was, as it were, given back to him once more.

The sick man stirred. Donovan went to the bedside. There too he was conscious of change. The realisation of immortality brings relief, but it brings too a strange sense of awe.

The sleep had refreshed Ellis. He was a little better, and not quite so irritable, his assumed dislike too was put aside. Once more his only anxiety was to keep Donovan beside



him. As the day advanced he grew weaker, however. He was not in great pain, but very restless and weary, and in an agony of fear. At last, to relieve himself, he began to talk to Donovan.

"Do you remember what you said when you left the Manor?" he began, hurriedly, "about hoping I'd remember to my dying day? This is my dying day, and you've got your wish."

"I have unwished it," said Donovan, quietly.

"I believe you have," said Ellis, looking at him steadily for a minute. "But how can I forget? The sin is the same whether you forgive or not. And I've not even enjoyed it—do you hear? I've not been able to enjoy it!"

"No? Then God has been very good to you," said Donovan.

"Good! What do you mean?" groaned Ellis.

"That the greatest curse you can have is enjoyment of wrong," replied Donovan. "I know only too bitterly what it means."

Ellis seemed to muse over the words, then he continued—"I've done what I could. I've got it signed and witnessed. See!" and he drew a folded paper from beneath the pillow. "But it's no good, it's not a bit of good. It's made me feel no better."

Donovan glanced at the confession and put it aside.

"Don't let it be lost, don't leave it about," cried Ellis, nervously. "Without it you won't get your rights, and if not, I couldn't rest in my grave."

Just at that moment Donovan felt supremely indifferent as to the property, but to please Ellis he put the paper in a safe place.

"It was all that wretched will that ruined me!" cried the miserable man. "If it hadn't been so small, if I hadn't been alone, there'd have been no temptation. I wasn't such a bad fellow before then. And now I'm ruined, lost! Do you hear what I say? I've lost my soul! How can you sit there so quietly, when in a few hours I shall be dead? Don't you believe in hell?"

"Yes," said Donovan, slowly. "And I think that you and I have already spent most of our lives there."

"That wasn't what they used to teach; I believe you're half a sceptic still," groaned Ellis. "I'm sure there was a way of getting it all set right at the last, if only I could remember."

"Would you like to see a clergyman?" asked Donovan.

"No, no, no," cried Ellis, vehemently; "I've been a hypocrite all my life before them, I can at least speak the truth to you—you who know just what I am."

"Then," said Donovan, very diffidently, urged to speak only by the extremity of the case, "if you want one who knows all, you can go straight to God who is nearer you than anyone else can be."

"That's nothing new!" exclaimed Ellis, petulantly. "I've known that all my life."

"*How* did you know it?" asked Donovan.

"I don't know how; they told me—my mother, and at church and school."

Conventional acceptance was a thing which Donovan could not understand.

"I think we must learn differently from that," he said, slowly, as if feeling his way on new ground. "Before you can really *know*, must you not be conscious of God's presence?"

"I've had that," groaned Ellis, "it's dogged me through everything—a dreadful text that was up in the old nursery, it used to make me shiver then—great black letters—'Thou God seest me;' I can see it now, and the horrid feeling after one had told a lie. Do you think there's no way out of it? They used to say something—I forget what, it never seemed to me very real. Do you think one *must* be punished?"

"Yes, I do," said Donovan.

"Oh! is there no way of getting off?" groaned Ellis.

"I don't think you'll wish to 'get off,'" replied Donovan.

"Not wish! How little you know! What would you do if you were lying as I am, with only a few hours more to live?—would you not wish to get off?"

"I think I should wish—I do wish to be saved from selfishness," said Donovan, slowly, "and to give myself unreservedly into God's keeping."

Death has a strange way of breaking down the strongest barriers of reserve; afterwards it seemed almost incredible to Donovan that he and Ellis, of all people in the world, should have spoken with such perfect openness to each other. It was a little hard on him perhaps to be called upon so soon to speak of the truths he had so lately grasped, but the very freshness of his conviction gave his words a peculiar power, the very slowness and diffidence of his humility touched Ellis when glib, conventional utterances would have passed by him unheeded. And yet the sick man did not gather from his words one grain of selfish comfort. Donovan evidently did not believe in any charm for converting the death-bed of a wrong-doer into that of a saint, he seemed perfectly convinced that punishment *did* await him, purifying punishment. And Ellis who had all his life hoped to

set things right at the last, was much more terrified at the idea of certain punishment even with his ultimate good in view than of everlasting punishment, which, by some theological charm, he might hope altogether to escape. The inevitable loss of even some small possession is much more keenly felt than the possible loss of all, which we hope to avert, and the very idea of which we can hardly take into our minds.

The one only comfort of that terrible day was in the realisation of Donovan's forgiveness. By degrees this began to work in the poor man's mind, almost imperceptibly to alter his grim notions of the stern, inexorable Judge in whom he believed, and before whom he trembled.

It was night again, the room was dim and quiet, but beside the bed the dying man could see the face of his late enemy, the strong, pure, strangely powerful face which, in his helplessness, he had learnt to love.

"Do you think God's as forgiving as you are?" he faltered. "Do you think He's better than they say?"

Donovan was dismayed. Did the poor fellow know what he was saying? could he have such a terribly low ideal? He would not allow his surprise to show itself, however. He drew nearer.

"See," he said, at the same time raising his cousin's head so that it rested on his shoulder in the way which gave the sick man most relief. "I know very little of what they say, and am at the beginning of everything, but I am sure that whatever love I have for you is but the tiniest ray of His love; and if you persist in shutting out all but one ray when the whole sun is ready to light you, you will find it, as I have found it, very dark."

And then in the silence that followed Donovan fell into a reverie. Why was it that this man found it so hard to believe? He had evidently no such difficulties as he himself had had—no intellectual perplexities. Had he believed in some terrific phantom? or had the long selfishness of years brought him to a state in which he could not reach the idea of love? Yet he could reach the idea of *human* love and pity; he clung now almost like a child to Donovan.

"Who would have thought that you would be the only one with me at the last?" he murmured. "But I shall have to leave even you; I must go alone to face God, to stand before the Judge. I wish I'd never been born, I tell you!"

Donovan felt almost choked; he would have given worlds to have had Charles Osmond there

at that moment. But there was no chance of getting a better man to speak to Ellis then, nor, had the greatest saints upon earth been present, would they have had as much influence with him as the man whom he had wronged.

The clock struck three. There was a long silence. Donovan seemed to have gained what he wanted in the waiting, for his face was strangely bright when he turned once more to Ellis.

"I am going to tell you something about my father," he began. And then, much in the way in which he used to soothe Dot's restless nights with stories, Donovan told faithfully and graphically the whole story of his school disgrace. How he had cared not a rush for all the blame, how he had braved opinion, how the gauntletting had hardened and embittered him; then of his return to the house, of the way in which his father had received him, of the forgiveness which had first made him repentant, of the fatherly grief which had made him just for his father's sake care for the punishment.

His voice got a little husky towards the end. Ellis, too, was evidently much moved.

"Do you think God is at all like your father?" he faltered.

It hurt Donovan a little, this bald anthropomorphism, but recognising that Ellis was really

feeling after the underlying truth, he answered,

"I think my father was, as it were, a shadow of God—a shadow of the great Fatherhood—and the shadow can't be without the reality."

Ellis seemed satisfied. After that he slept at intervals, murmuring indistinctly every now and then fragments of the story he had just heard, or wandering back to recollections of his childhood.

Just as the dawn was breaking, he came to himself once more, speaking quite clearly.

"I should like you to say the Lord's Prayer," he said.

So together Donovan and the dying man said the "Our Father," and sealed their reconciliation.

Then, tremblingly and fearfully, Ellis entered the valley of the shadow of death. Truly there are last which shall be first, and first last! The conventionally religious man, the man whose orthodoxy had always been considered beyond dispute, would have died in black darkness had not one ray of love been kindled in his cold heart by the forgiveness he so little deserved, had not a gleam of truth been given to him by one who but yesterday had been an agnostic.

At sunrise he passed away into the Unseen.

For thirty-six hours Donovan had been in



constant attendance on his cousin. When all was over he could no longer resist the craving for air which had for some time made the sick-room almost intolerable to him. In the stillness of that early winter morning he left the house and made his way into the park. The ground was white with frost, the sky intensely blue, the air sharp and exhilarating. The outer world suited his state of mind exactly. He was awed and quieted by the death-bed he had just quitted, but above the stillness and above the awe there was that marvellous sense of the Eternal which had so lately dawned for him, a consciousness which widened the whole universe, which gave new beauty to all around. He walked on rapidly into the bleakest, most open part of the park, a peculiar elasticity in his step, a light in his eyes.

It took him back to a day in his childhood, when his tutor had first given him some idea of the most recent solar discoveries. He could clearly remember the sort of exultant glow of wonder and awe which had taken possession of him ; how the whole world had seemed full of grand possibilities ; how he had rushed out alone on to the downs near the Manor, and in every blade of grass, in every tiny flower, in every wayside stone had seen new wonders, strange invisible workings which no one could

fathom or grasp. The very wind blowing on his heated brow had been laden with the marvellous ; nothing could be common, or small, or ordinary to him again.

That had been his feeling when he first realised the physical unseen ; his first realisation of the spiritual unseen was a little like it, only deeper and more lasting, and that while the child's delight had had an element of wildness in it, the man's rapture was all calmness.

The park seemed deserted. The sole creature he met was an organ-grinder setting out on his daily rounds. Involuntarily they exchanged a *buon giorno*. His very dreams of "liberty, equality, fraternity" took a wider and deeper meaning in the breadth and light of that morning.

There are more resurrection days than the world dreams of—Easters which are not less real because the church bells do not ring—which, though chanted of by no earthly choir, cause joy in the presence of the angels of God.

## CHAPTER XVII.

## TREVETHAN SPEAKS.

But Thou wilt sin and grief destroy ;  
 That so the broken bones may joy,  
 And tune together in a well-set song,  
     Full of His praises,  
     Who dead men raises.  
 Fractures well cured make us more strong.

GEORGE HERBERT.

THE years had wrought very little visible change in Gladys. Outwardly her life had been very quiet and uneventful since her last meeting with Donovan, and whatever anxiety or inward trouble she had had was not registered on her fair, open brow, or in her clear, quiet, blue-grey eyes. That time was passing quickly, and that years had elapsed since Donovan had been at Porthkerran, was shown much more clearly by the change in Nesta, who, from a remarkably small child, had shot up into a slim little girl of eight years. The two sisters were walking together along the Porthkerran cliffs

one winter afternoon, Nesta telling an endless fairy tale for the joint benefit of her doll and her sister, Gladys listening every now and then for a few minutes, but a good deal engrossed with her own thoughts.

The Caustons were spending a few days with them, and Stephen's presence was rather tiresome and embarrassing. She had really come out chiefly to escape his company, for the afternoon was not at all tempting. A strong west wind was blowing, the sky was dull and leaden, the sea grey, and restless, and stormy. Gladys was not easily affected by weather, but to-day the dulness seemed to tell on her. There was something depressing in the great, grey expanse of sea heaving and tossing restlessly, in the long white fringe of foam along the coastline, in the heavy, gloomy sky. Only one boat was in sight, a little pilot-boat which had just left Porthkerran Bay. It was tossing fearfully; every now and then a great gust of wind threatened to blow it quite over. She watched it bending and swaying beneath the blast, but still making way, until at length it disappeared in the grey mist which shrouded the distance.

Gladys sighed as it passed away out of sight. It reminded her—why she scarcely knew—of a life which for a little while had touched her life very nearly, of a strong, determined, resolute

man struggling hard with adverse circumstances under a leaden sky of doubt. He, too, had passed away into a grey mist. For years she had heard absolutely nothing of him; their lives were quite severed. Was he still under the leaden sky? she wondered. Was all still so fearfully against him? Was he still toiling on against wind and tide? A little rift in the clouds made way for a gleam of sunlight, and it so happened that the gleam fell on the horizon-line in one golden little spot of brightness. Right in the centre of it she could clearly make out the dark sail of the pilot-boat. It brought to her mind a line of George Herbert—

“The sun still shineth there or here.”

And she walked on more hopefully, strangely inspirited by that momentary glimpse of sunlight. What right had she to doubt that the sun would shine for him sooner or later! Might not he, too, have even now reached the brightness? lived out his bit of grey?

“We will go and see Trevethan,” she said to little Nesta. “It is quite a long time since we’ve heard anything about him.”

They passed the place where Donovan had climbed down after the lost hat, and before many minutes reached the forge, where Trevethan was hammering away at his anvil, the

sparks springing up from the red-hot metal like fireflies. Standing beside the blazing fire was a little pale-faced girl.

"Good day, miss," said the blacksmith, glancing round and laying aside his hammer. "I'm right glad to see ye, miss. I was a-coming up to the house this very night to tell ye our good news."

"News of your son?" asked Gladys, feeling certain that nothing less could have called out such radiant satisfaction in Trevethan's face.

"Not news of him, Miss Gladys, but himself; he's come, he's here now, and this is his little one, miss, called after you. Jack was determined she should have a good Cornish name: He be out now, more's the pity, but we be both a-coming to-night to see the doctor, to tell him of Mr. Farrant, and how it's all his doing."

"Mr. Farrant?" questioned Gladys, her colour deepening.

"Yes, miss, Mr. Donovan as was here three years gone by. He promised to look out for Jack, and you'd never think, miss, what he's been to my poor lad, a-nursing of him his own self, and a-persuading of him to come home when Jack was frightened whether I'd give him a welcome or not."

"Was your son at St. Thomas's?" asked Gladys.

"Yes, miss, but Mr. Farrant he found him out in his own place. You tell, little one, how you fetched him to see father."

So little Gladys told shyly, yet graphically, too, how she had gone one rainy evening to fetch Donovan, how he had made her sit by his fire, how he had held his umbrella over her on the way back, and had done all he could to help them. The tears would come into Gladys' eyes for very happiness. Had she not known that the truth would come out at last! Had she not been right to believe in him without the slightest proof!

"Will Mr. Dono come to stay with us again?" asked Nesta, as they walked home.

"I don't know, darling," she replied. "Some day perhaps."

But her heart was dancing with happiness, that "perhaps" had a good deal of assurance in it.

The two Trevethans had a long interview with the doctor that evening. Such an unexpected opportunity of hearing about Donovan was not to be neglected, and Dr. Tremain made the most minute inquiries. Jack Trevethan was a very shrewd fellow; from the most trifling indications he had long ago guessed all the facts of the case. He had seen Donovan flush quickly at the mention of Miss Tremain, had

found that he was no longer on speaking terms with Stephen Causton, had put two and two together in the quick way common to observant people, especially when they are watching life in a circle above them. He was thoroughly devoted to Donovan, and very eager to do him service. Very carefully and minutely he told Dr. Tremain of their first meeting in the billiard saloon. Then for the first time Donovan's true relation to Stephen transpired. The doctor could hardly believe that he heard rightly. It was such an entire reversing of all that he had feared, all that he had unwillingly believed. Could it indeed be that Donovan had only tried to keep Stephen out of evil? Could he possibly have gone with him to the Z—— races merely to prevent his going with the set which Trevethan very graphically described? The ex-billiard-marker disclosed several very damaging facts; Stephen had often visited the saloon with the same set of students, but Donovan had never again entered the place.

Gladys could not understand why her father looked so worried and perplexed when he came back to the drawing-room that evening. Did he not believe the good news? Must he not be infinitely relieved? A sudden light was thrown on her perplexity, however, when her father spoke.



"I want a word with you, Stephen, will you come into the study?"

Of course whatever proved Donovan's innocence must at the same time convict Stephen! She had not thought of that!

Stephen had a sort of presentiment that his time was come. He followed the doctor into the next room.

"I have nothing pleasant to tell you," began Dr. Tremain, speaking rather quickly, and in the tone of one who fears he may lose his temper. "I have just had an interview with a man who was present at a certain billiard saloon in Villiers Street at the time you were in the habit of frequenting it. The man was one of the markers, he has described to me the *one* evening when Donovan met you there and persuaded you to leave. Is that what you call being led into temptation by him?"

Stephen turned pale.

"It is exceedingly hard that you take the word of a mere stranger before mine," he said. "This man, whoever he may be, has no doubt been instigated by Farrant? Why should you believe him?"

"Because he has truth written on his face," said Dr. Tremain, "and you have not. Stephen, I do not wish to be hard on you, I will try not to prejudge you, but I implore you to tell me the whole truth."

To tell the whole truth was unfortunately not at all in Stephen's line; he began to excuse himself.

"Farrant is as hard as nails, he judges everyone by himself; because he had once been a regular gambler was no reason that I should follow his example. He'd no business to spy on me."

"Take care," said the doctor, quickly, "your own words are condemning you."

"It is you who force me to condemn myself," said Stephen, sullenly. Then after a pause he all at once broke down and buried his face in his hands. "If Gladys could have loved me," he sobbed, "it would all have been different; it's been my love for her that has undone me, made me want to seem better than I was."

The doctor, at once sorrowful and angry, paced the room in silence, but there was something so selfish in Stephen's confessions that, in spite of himself, the anger would predominate.

"You call by the name of love what was nothing more than mere selfish desire," he said, sternly. "How could you dare to ask any woman to be your wife when to gain her you had acted one continual lie! Do you realise that all these years an innocent man has been suffering for your guilt? Do you realise that one word from Donovan, the word he was too

generous to speak, would have brought all your falseness to the light? What do you expect him to think of Christianity if that is the way you behave. You have brought shame to your religion! You have disgraced your name! And not only that, but you have utterly misled me, caused me entirely to misjudge the man of all others I would have treated with greatest delicacy—greatest justice. How could you tell me such lies? Had you no generosity—no sense of gratitude?"

Stephen cowered under the storm, but kept silence.

Presently, in the saddening consciousness of his own grievous mistake, the doctor's anger died away.

"I will say no more, it is scarcely fair to reproach you with my own hastiness of judgment, my own want of insight," he said, in a voice full of sorrow, which reproached Stephen far more than his anger; "but when I think of what Donovan has borne in silence, from the very people too who should have been his best friends, it is almost more than I can endure."

Stephen's better nature began to show itself at last, his heart smote him as he realised all the pain his deceit had caused. He left off excusing himself, and somewhat falteringly told the story from the very beginning, revealing the sort of

double life he had led for so many years, wild and self-indulgent when alone, falsely religious and proper when with his mother. The doctor was very good to him; promised to help him as far as he could by speaking to Mrs. Causton, and perhaps for the first time thoroughly awakened Stephen's love and respect. Before they parted that night they had discussed the future as well as the past, and Stephen had made up his mind to go abroad, to try with all his might to redeem his name.

Trevethan had after all been detained at St. Thomas's later than Donovan had expected. He had learnt at the hospital that his friend had not gone out to the war, that instead he was nursing some relation. This was all he could tell Dr. Tremain, but of course the impulsive doctor, even with such slight information, prepared to go up to London at once. Letters had failed so signally before that he would no longer trust them, he must see Donovan to explain matters fully, to apologise as he wished.

Some cruel fate seemed to have ordained that he should always have to endure a most irksome time of waiting in the York Road lodging-house. Donovan was of course not at home; the old captain was out, but was expected in an hour's time, he was the only person who knew Mr. Farrant's address. The landlady

invited the doctor to come in and wait. The room seemed very dull and quiet, the only trace of Donovan which it bore was in a sheet of writing-paper pinned up in a conspicuous place over the mantelpiece, whereon was inscribed a high-flown but affectionate declaration that John Frewin, late captain of the *Metora*, bound himself hereby to touch no alcoholic drink until the return of his friend Donovan Farrant.

Apparently the old man had kept his pledge, for he came in before long looking exceedingly respectable and sober. Dr. Tremain had to listen to the whole account of the drawing up of the paper, the surprise it was to be to the captain's "dear friend and benefactor," and the dreariness of the place without him before he could elicit Donovan's address from the talkative old gentleman. Even then Rouge tried to scare him with terrific accounts of the small-pox.

At length, however, he was really on his way to Connaught Square; by this time it was evening, and when he reached the house it seemed dark and deserted. He rang, and after a long delay, was admitted. Phoebe eyed him with some suspicion, but hearing that he was a doctor, she let him come in and showed him into the dining-room, lighting the gas for his benefit. Then for the first time they discovered

that Donovan was stretched on the sofa fast asleep.

"Don't wake him," said the doctor, "I am in no hurry and will wait. I suppose he has had very hard work. Is Mr. Farrant any better?"

"You have not heard, sir? He died early this morning," replied Phœbe, gravely. "Mr. Donovan should have rested before, but we couldn't persuade him; there has been many things to see to to-day, for they say the funeral must be to-morrow."

Neither the lights nor the voices roused the sleeper; by-and-by Phœbe went away, and the doctor waited with eagerness not unmixed with anxiety for the awaking, remembering with a pang their last parting at the station, recalling painfully the last words which even then had touched him, "All I ask is that you will just forget me."

At last a noise in the square roused Donovan, he started up, rubbed his eyes, caught sight of Dr. Tremain, and sprang to his feet.

"You here!" he exclaimed, in astonishment, and then a sudden shade passed over his face, and the same peculiar expression of doubt, almost of annoyance, showed itself, which had so grievously hurt the doctor at their last meeting. He understood it well enough now, however.

"Yes, I am here at last," he said, grasping Donovan's hand. "Here to ask your forgiveness, to tell you that we all know now how much we have been misled."

Donovan's eyes lighted up, but he waited in questioning silence, careful still not to compromise Stephen in the slightest degree.

"I learnt all from Trevethan's son," continued the doctor. "And then a very few questions brought out the whole truth from Stephen. Can you forgive us, Donovan, for misjudging you so abominably?"

"It was my own fault—my own doing, at any rate," said Donovan, smiling. "You were very slow to judge me at all, and it seemed best all round that you should believe me to be in the wrong."

"It shielded Stephen, of course," said the doctor, "but he did not deserve shielding, and it gave the rest of us a great deal of pain. It was very generous of you, but surely mistaken."

"I asked you to forget me," said Donovan. "I hoped and believed you would do so. It was not only or chiefly for Stephen's sake. I believed that it would be better in every way."

"You said so when we last saw each other," said the doctor, "but even now I cannot see why it was necessary. And why did you refuse to come to us that summer, and then tell

me you invented an excuse? Was that in any way connected with Stephen? Can you not tell me now why you could not come?"

"Yes," replied Donovan, with a strange thrill in his voice, "I can tell you even that now. I could not come because I loved your daughter. I was not sure that I could help showing it; I thought—it may have been presumptuous to think so—that she might possibly care for me. It was right, I think, to go away, and I hoped that she—that you all—would forget me."

"And little Gladys was the one who told me from the very first that I must be mistaken, that I had judged you wrongly," said the doctor, rather huskily. "We have all been very poor hands at forgetting you, Donovan; do you want us to go on with the dreary farce any longer? Will you not come back to us?"

"You must yourself give me the power of saying 'Yes' to that question," said Donovan, his colour rising a little. "A few days ago I must still have refused; but if you could trust Gladys to me, if she can possibly love one who has lived the life I have lived—who has but seen, as it were, one ray of the light in which she has lived all her life—then I will come to you."

The two men wrung each other's hands.

"Gladys must speak for herself," said the



doctor. "For my part, I would trust my little girl to you unreservedly. I will not thank you for the way in which you have acted, but"—he struggled with his emotion—"it has made you very dear to me, Donovan. No man in the world would I so gladly call my son."

Then being Englishmen, and not caring to trust themselves to talk more on a subject which moved them so much, they plunged rather abruptly into other topics, discussed Ellis Far-rant's illness, the legality of his duly-witnessed confession, the great increase of small-pox in London.

It was not until after the funeral, late in the following day, that Donovan had time to go to the Osmonds, and then it was only to take a hurried farewell, for Dr. Tremain had made light of all fear of infection, and had insisted on his returning with him to Trenant.

"So you see," he added, after briefly alluding to all that had passed since the night he and Charles Osmond had last met, "life is beginning to open out for me in all sorts of unexpected ways. I can hardly realise yet—I have hardly tried to think—that Oakdene is really mine. How am I ever to turn myself into the respectable country gentleman?"

Charles Osmond laughed.

"I am not much afraid for you," he replied,

quietly. "It will be a more difficult life than the hard-working surgeon-life you had planned for yourself; but I fancy you can make a great deal of it."

"It would be hard to face," said Donovan, "if I had not a hope that the truest of helpers, the sweetest and best woman in the world, may possibly begin the new life at Oakdene with me. It is nothing but a hope—to-morrow I shall know; but I could not help telling you of it—you who have helped me through these black years."

"I wish you good speed," said Charles Osmond, conveying somehow in tone and look and touch a great deal more than the mere words.

Then the two parted.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

“MY HOPES AND THINE ARE ONE.”

O we will walk this world,  
Yoked in all exercise of noble end,  
And so through those dark gates across the wild  
That no man knows. Indeed I love thee ; come,  
Yield thyself up ! My hopes and thine are one :  
Accomplish thou my manhood and thyself ;  
Lay thy sweet hands in mine and trust to me.

*The Princess.*

**I**N spite of the inevitable excitement and anxiety, Donovan slept almost the whole way from London to St. Kerrans ; he had large arrears of sleep to make up, and the doctor was glad enough to see him settle himself in a corner seat and take the rest he so much needed. By the time they reached St. Kerrans he was quite himself again, quiet rather, and not much inclined to talk, but with an unusual light in his dark eyes. Star and Ajax were waiting for them at the station ; they drove

through the little Cornish town, with its grey houses, and out into the narrow winding lanes, which Donovan remembered so well. It seemed almost a lifetime since the Sunday evening when he had first spoken unreservedly with Dr. Tremain—long years ago since their last drive to St. Kerrans, when he thought he had parted with Gladys for ever. His heart beat high with hope; every step was bringing him nearer the woman he loved! the very trees and hedgerows seemed to welcome him as he passed, even the cross-grained old man at the turnpike had a friendly greeting for him.

It was dark by the time they reached Porthkerran; the stars were shining brightly through the frosty air, the ponies' feet rang sharply on the hard road, in all the quaint, irregular houses shone friendly lights; he could see them climbing far up the hill, old Admiral Smith's house forming the apex. She was here in this home-like little fishing village! in a few minutes he should see her again! every pulse in him beat at double-quick time as he thought of it. They drove on through the quaint market-place, with its stone fountain, surrounded now with rows of boats drawn up from the beach into winter quarters. A blaze of light came from the little inn where he had stayed with his father, where he had first met Dr. Tremain; lights shone, too,

from the windows of the school-house, and children's voices rang out clearly into the street—they were singing Dot's favourite old carol—the refrain reached him distinctly :

“ O tidings of comfort and joy,  
Comfort and joy,  
O tidings of comfort and joy ! ”

The doctor made the ponies draw up.

“ Gladys must be at her choir practice,” he said. “ We will see if she is ready to come home.”

He gave the reins to the groom, and Donovan followed him into the school-room.

There was Gladys surrounded with little blue-eyed Cornish children, sitting queen-like in a sort of bower of holly, and ivy, and laurel branches, for the next day was to be the children's winter school-treat. It had been postponed once or twice, but though somewhat late in the season, they were to celebrate it in Christmas fashion, and would not dispense with either carols or greenery.

She was not the least altered ; it was just the same sweet, pure, sunshiny face, the remembrance of which had so often kept him from evil. They greeted each other in the most ordinary way. Then she turned to speak to her father, but Donovan was quite content,

scarcely wished for more than the sight of her just then.

"Shall we drive you home?" said the doctor. "Is your practice over?"

"It is just finished, but I wanted rather to see old Mrs. Carne—she seems worse again."

"I will take back Jackie and Nesta then," said the doctor. "Donovan will see you safely home, I've no doubt."

Donovan, inwardly blessing the doctor, carried off Nesta to the pony-carriage, impatient to have them all out of the way. Was not each minute wasted which did not bring that perfect mutual understanding which he so longed for! She might not care for him, still they would understand each other, make an end of the miserable silence and doubt of these long years.

The pony-carriage drove off, the last carol was sung; with curtsies and salutes the small singers ran noisily out of the school. Donovan, whose "duteous service" had so long consisted in silence and absence, now made the most of his opportunity; raked out the fire, tidied the school, turned out the lamps, then with, in spite of himself, a certain sweet sense of possession—possession if only for these few minutes—he turned to Gladys, who for once seemed a little shy and silent.

They went out into the market-square, closely followed by Waif.

"It is a house down on the shore I want to go to," said Gladys, wishing her heart would not beat so uncomfortably. But somehow, when Donovan next spoke, there was that in his manner which calmed her.

"I am so glad to have this walk with you. It was good of your father to give me this time with you at once. I want, Gladys, to know how I am to come back to Porthkerran this time. The first time I came to you it was as a penniless outcast; the second as a friend; the next as one who loved you, but dared not speak. I have come this time ready to speak to you, if you will hear me; to ask if you can give me more than friendship—whether you care to take a love which has always been yours. May I go on? Will you hear me?"

She seemed to speak an assent, but her voice trembled, he took her hand in his, made her lean on his arm, still holding the little hand in his strong grasp.

"You see," he continued, "ever since I was a mere boy you have been my ideal. In a very strange way I had three passing glimpses of you, the first just after my father died, when I was miserable and disgraced, then again those two meetings when I was wronged and revenge-

ful. Oh! Gladys, you little know what you did for me, what depths you saved me from. I think I am glad you saw me at my worst, without it I should hardly have dared to speak to you like this. You know all that I was, you were my friend when others shrank from me as an atheist, you have taught me what love is, and now that I am beginning to learn something of the everlastingness of love, I want your help more and more. Gladys, will you be my wife?"

"I think I have always loved you," she answered, quite simply and quietly. "And I was always sure the Light would come to you."

"Yes," said Donovan, holding her hand more closely, "you could look at things from another point of view, you believed in a higher power; I, you see, only knew myself, and how could I dare to think of you as my wife? My darling, even now I half tremble at the thought. Can you trust yourself to one who is at the beginning of everything? I have spent my life in learning what you have always known. Can you put up with such incompleteness? Can you trust me?"

"After trusting in the darkness it is easy to trust in the light," said Gladys, softly.

"You did believe in me then, though I tried



so hard that you should not," said Donovan, half smiling.

"You are not a good deceiver or concealer," replied Gladys. "That day at Z—— on the staircase when you said you could explain nothing, I could see by your face that you had never led Stephen into harm. I couldn't help believing you."

"I should have thought I was flinty enough," said Donovan, smiling now, though the remembrance of that parting still brought a cold chill to his heart.

"Yes," said Gladys, "in one way. I mean," she added, shyly, "that I thought you did not care for me."

"That was because I did love you. Will you take that silence now, darling, as a proof of the love I cannot speak even when I may. I thought it would only make you wretched then. I knew so bitterly what a difference of faith means between those who are very dear to each other."

Gladys looked up at him, a beautiful light in her face. How much he had thought of her! how true and unselfish his love was! she could not help contrasting it with Stephen's blindly selfish love and strangely different proposal.

"Directly you came into the school just now," she said, "I thought how like you had

grown to the picture of little Dot—it is your eyes that have changed so. Oh! Donovan, how glad she will be!"

He pressed her hand, but did not speak. They walked along the shore in silence; presently reaching the little cottage where the sick woman lived, Gladys went in, and Donovan waited for her outside, not sorry for a minute's pause in which to realise his happiness.

In a little while she joined him again, and for a minute they stood still looking out seawards. A faint streak of yellow lingered in the west, but above the stars were shining brightly, while across the dark rolling sea there gleamed from the light-house two long tracks of light athwart each other. The same thought came to each of them, the sweet old saying—"Via crucis, via lucis." Neither of them spoke, but to each came the longing that their love might always be that self-sacrificing love which alone can lead into the light. It seemed to Gladys like a sort of sacrament when Donovan stooped down and with a grave reverence pressed his lips to hers.

"You will teach me," he said, after a time, as they walked back along the beach.

She felt like a baby beside him as he spoke, in his humility, in his grand self-denying

nobleness he seemed to tower above her.

"Teach you!" she said, smiling. "I should as soon think of teaching papa! And yet papa always says the little ones *do* teach him. Perhaps in that way, Donovan—can you be content with that sort of child-wife who cannot understand half the great things you think of?"

"My darling, how can you use such a word?" he exclaimed. "Content! And have you not been teaching me all these years? How little the world knows its true teachers! How little the pure-hearted ones think of the lessons they teach!"

"We will learn together," said Gladys, softly.

"There is one thing I should like to tell you now," said Donovan. "I had arranged, you know, to go out to the war, and I find there is still a vacancy in one of the ambulances. You will not mind my going out, darling? I feel in a measure bound to go, and I should like, at any rate, a few months of good stiff work. Some time must pass before the legal matters are settled and the Manor really becomes my own, and I should like to be doing something in the waiting-time. You will not mind my going?"

Gladys did of course shrink from the thought,

but she knew that in marrying such a man as Donovan she must make up her mind to much sacrifice. The delight of even now being able to share his work helped to lessen the pain.

"I think," she replied, "you would not have been Donovan if you had not wanted to go."

"And then with you," said Donovan, "I shall be strong to begin what I feel fearfully unequal to—the life as master of Oakdene. There is plenty of work for us at Greyshot, and you must help me to love the neighbours, who perhaps may not hate me now so much as they did. I almost fancy even Mrs. Ward may be civil now that I have found a woman brave enough to be my wife! Are you ready, darling, to be the wife of a radical?—to be looked down on perhaps as the wife of a some-time atheist?"

"To be *your* wife," said Gladys, gently.

They had made their way up the steep winding street and were in sight of Trenant, the dear old gabled house with its ivy-covered walls and welcoming lights.

"This is the place where I first saw you," said Donovan, glancing in at the drawing-room window. On the very spot on which he now stood with Gladys, he had once stood lonely and despairing, watching with bitterness a glimpse of home life. Some thought of the infinite

possibilities of the future, of the limited view of the present, came to him.

"How glorious life is!" he exclaimed. "How different from what one used to think it! Oh! Gladys, if we can but do half we long to do! What a grand old working-place the world is!"

"You will be a grand worker," thought Gladys, but she did not reply in direct words.

They had reached the porch, some one had heard their steps, and as they drew near the door was thrown open. Donovan saw in a blaze of friendly light a sweeter home drama than the one he remembered long ago. There they all were—a welcoming group. Nesta, Jackie, Dick just home from sea, the father with indescribable content written on his face, and before all the mother—the truest mother Donovan had ever known—her soft grey eyes shining into his with loving welcome and understanding.

"Home at last!" she said smiling; and then seeing all, she gave a mother's greeting to both "children."

THE END.

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